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SEPTEMBER, 1993 VOLUME 15, NUMBER 7

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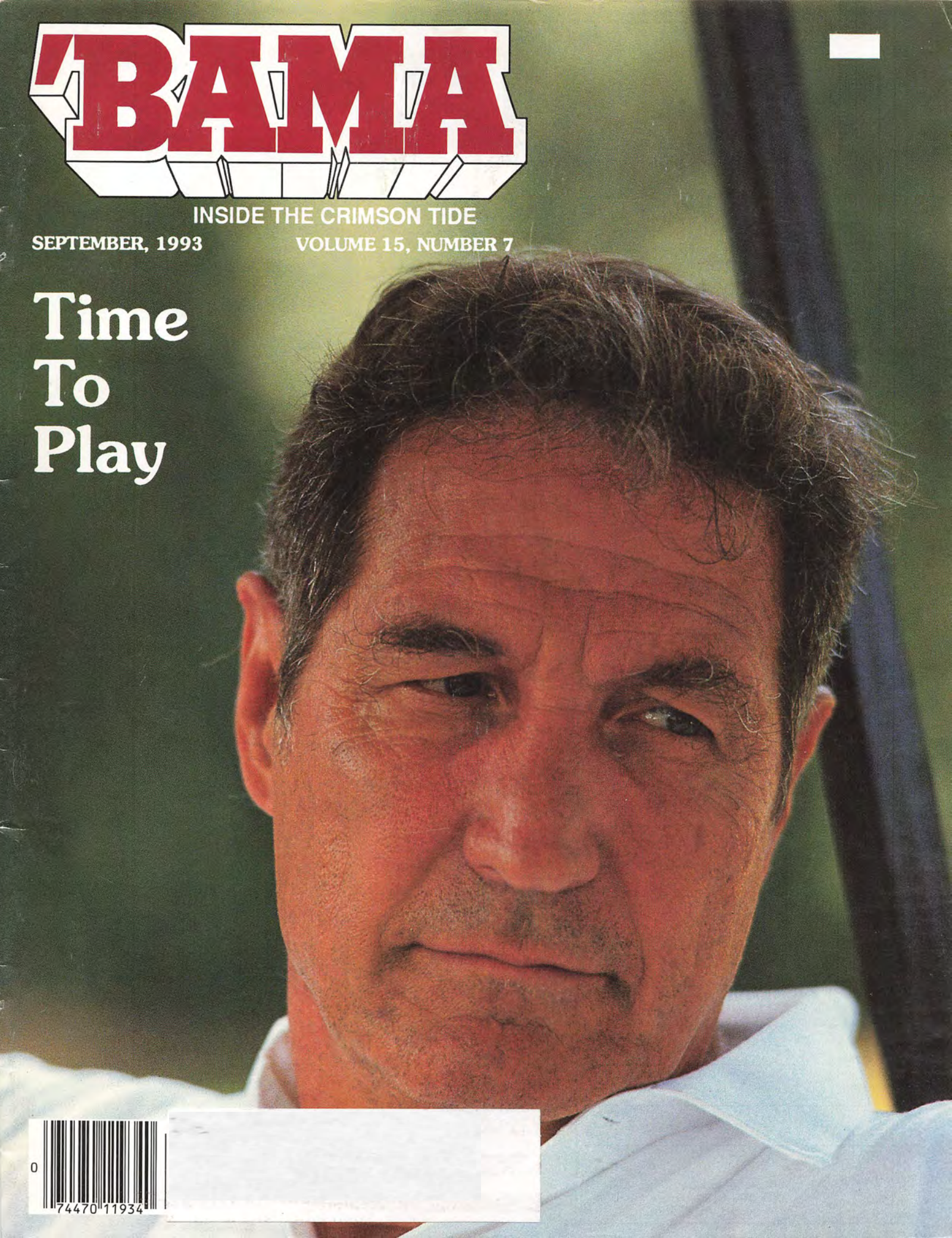

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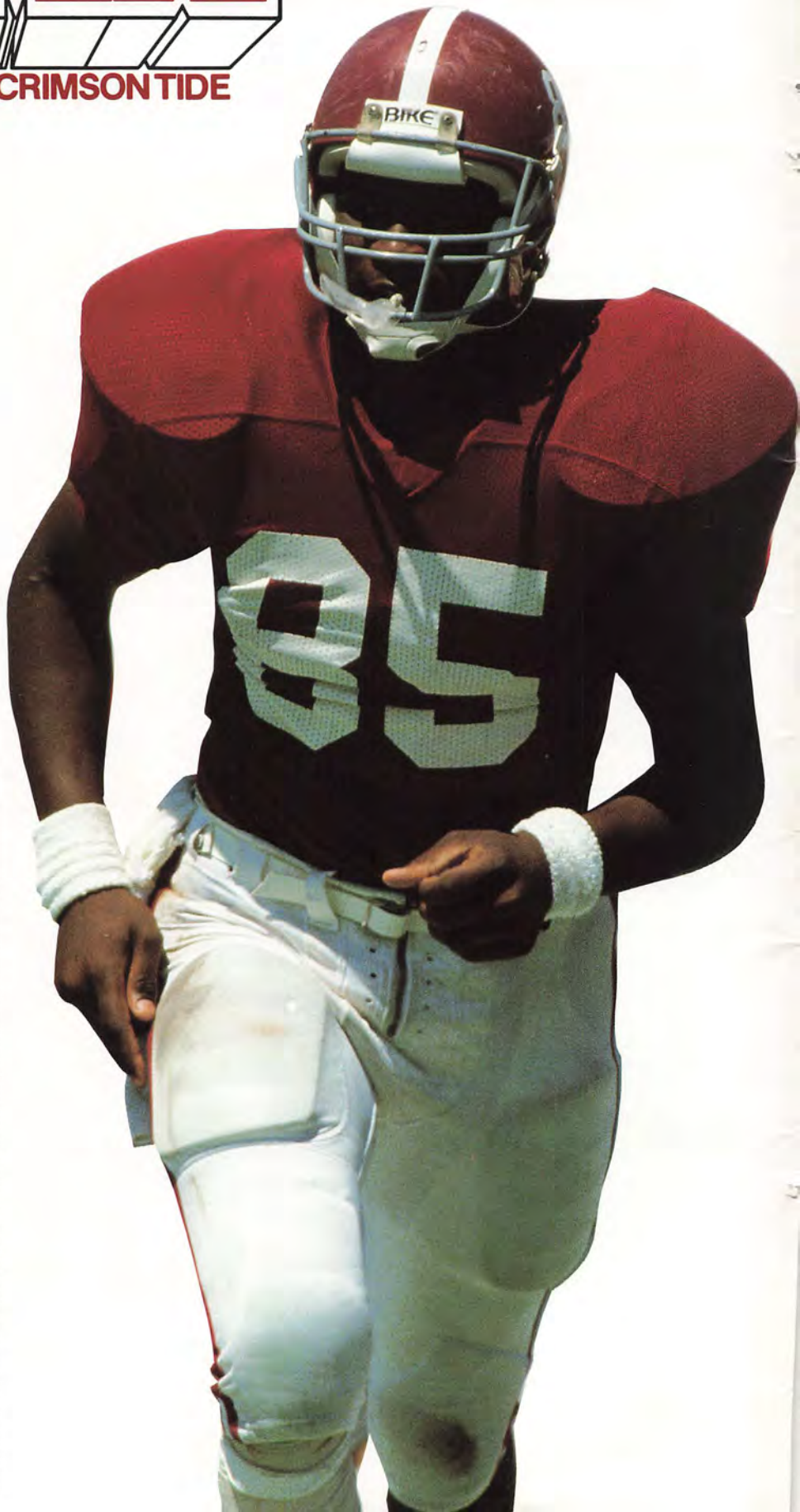

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'BAMA
INSIDE THE CRIMSON TIDE
SEPTEMBER, 1993 VOLUME 15, NUMBER 7

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The Ingredients Are There

by Kirk McNair

Bama has players and coaches to be good enough to win it all again

Alabama is trying to do something this year that no college football team has done since Alabama did it in 1979. The Crimson Tide is attempting to repeat as national champions.

The best way to do that is to win every game, as Alabama did in 1979, a 12-0 season. This year it would take another 13-win season, something Alabama accomplished for the first time last year. Going undefeated doesn't assure a national championship, but two year-old developments certainly help Bama's chances (as they did in 1992). One is the Southeastern Conference Championship Game, which focuses the attention of college football on one game. The winner of that game emerges with increased prestige. The other is the bowl coalition, which encourages a meeting of the number one and number two ranked teams. Last year Bama came off its SEC Championship Game victory with a number two national ranking, setting up the memorable Sugar Bowl game against top-ranked Miami.

Obviously, a team must have good players and good coaches to go undefeated. But sometimes it takes something more to win games and championships. It takes a little luck. Former Alabama Head Coach Paul Bryant frequently cited injury luck and schedule luck. Last year Alabama had both, key players staying healthy and a favorable schedule in that some usually strong opponents were down a bit in 1992.

College football is a coaches' game. Year-in and year-out the best coaches have the best records. Alabama may have the nation's best coaching staff; in fact, Bama may have the best coaching staff ever put together in college football. And it's intact from last season, although outside linebackers tutor Ellis Johnson may be restricted at times as he is treated for Hodgkin's disease, a form of cancer which was detected late this summer.

And Alabama has good players, including, perhaps, the nation's best football player in cornerback Antonio Langham. Bama has an experienced quarterback, proven players at almost every position, and exceptional depth in most areas. Additionally, Alabama football players have obviously worked hard in the off season to make themselves even better players. And as defending national champions, Alabama players will have confidence. (The flip side of that: Alabama opponents will have doubts.)

Senior Alabama cornerback Antonio Langham may be the nation's best football player.

Barry Fikes Photo

The schedule is the same as last year except for dates and sites, and most would list Bama's toughest opponents as Tennessee and Mississippi State–teams that must come to Alabama for this year's contests.

In short, all the ingredients are there. It may take some luck along the way. For instance, Alabama can't do anything about the teams in the Big Ten, the Pac-10 or the Southwest Conference. Last year it took Washington losing a late-season game and Texas A&M being beaten in the Cotton Bowl for Alabama's success to guarantee the national championship. And there are a few positions (center, fullback, cornerback) where an injury to a Tider could be difficult to overcome.

But every team seeking the national championship has to start somewhere, and most of them would be thrilled to start with what Alabama has. It's difficult to win back-to-back national championships. In fact, it's difficult to win one. This year any number of teams might win the national title, but only one can repeat. The quest begins at 4 p.m. Saturday, September 4, in Birmingham's Legion Field against Tulane.

It is a measure of how far along Alabama's football team is that within the first week of full contact practices Stallings twice took the team to Bryant-Denny Stadium for game-type scrimmages. There is always room for improvement, and it is the nature of coaches to discuss areas most needing improvement. Stallings is no exception to that, far more likely to point to weaknesses than to strengths in preseason evaluations of his team.

Nevertheless, some believe this may be the best Alabama team ever to take to the practice field in August. It is a team of fast, strong players who know what they are supposed to do and who do it.

Naturally, when a team is playing against itself in practice, both the offense and the defense can't look good. But even Stallings noted when criticizing offensive line blocking, "They were going against our first defense, and that's hard for anyone."

Last year Alabama won with the nation's best defense, an offense that didn't get the Tide in trouble, and a kicking game that was above average, though not exceptional. This year the offense should be much improved, the defense should still be among the nation's best (even with severe losses to the National Football League), and the kicking game should be better. Last year, after college coaching staffs were reduced by one and Bama lost its volunteer coach who had handled the kicking game, Stallings went to coaching by committee, each assistant coach in charge of a different phase of the game. This year, while all of the assistants still participate in special teams coaching, Stallings has put Danny Pearman in charge of the overall kicking game.

The difference between good teams and great teams is frequently offensive linemen. Almost every team has good skill po-

sition players and defensive players can be developed quickly with good athletes. But the offensive line takes far longer to teach than any other aspect of football.

Last year Alabama's offensive line became very good during the season and was exceptional late in the year. All but one of those starters returns. George Wilson has graduated, his place at left guard taken by senior John Clay. At left tackle, Matt Hammond will start for the fourth year, while Tobie Sheils at center is back for his third season after an All-SEC performance a year ago. Jon Stevenson, a junior, will be starting for the third season at right guard, while Roosevelt Patterson, who really came into his own the last half of last season–and particularly in the Sugar Bowl–is back at right tackle. And there is good depth behind them, players like Joey Harville, Maurice Belser, William Barger, Shannon Brown, Dennis Deason and Jeremy Pennington expected to get a healthy dose of playing time.

There's another offensive line position, albeit a hybrid spot. The tight end is a receiver, but in Alabama's offense he must also be a good blocker. Gone is Steve Busky and, as of this writing, so is the man many thought would replace Busky this year. Kris Mangum played in 11 games as a true freshman last year and had a very good spring, catching up to third-year sophomore Tony Johnson. However, a week into practice, Mangum left the team. Sometimes good players are frustrated and quit, then quickly return, and Mangum may fall in that category. Behind Johnson is true freshman Patrick Hape, who is one of the standouts in a standout freshman class. Matthew Pine can play tight end, but he is so valuable as the Tide's snapper in all kicking situations that Stallings might prefer he not be in the thick of the battle on offense.

Although losing Curt Brown to a knee injury is not trivial, Alabama has good players at both wide receiver spots. David Palmer goes into the season with no controversy and unique talent, and Bama seems determined to get the football into the hands of the gifted flanker. Rick Brown has taken up this fall where he left off last spring and will be a very good backup man to Palmer. Senior Kevin Lee has come a million miles as a pass receiver and he has speed that occupies two members of a defensive secondary. Marcell West looked very good in early fall work, then suffered a pulled muscle. Toderick Malone is expected to be a very good receiver, but his year away from football shows. One of Alabama's experiments that seems likely to pay off is the move of Chad Key from quarterback to split end.

For the second straight year Alabama is having to find replacements at tailback and fullback and for the second straight year it looks like the Tide will have very good ones. Tarrant Lynch is in a league of his own at fullback. Two true freshmen,

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Taurus Turner and Brian Steger, look like best bets to back up Lynch, although former quarterback Josh Niblett and a couple of walk-ons, Marcus Moring and Harold Swopes are also in the picture.

At tailback, Chris Anderson has seniority and he also appears to be much stronger this year. But he'll have to battle to keep Sherman Williams from taking the first team job. Freshman Curtis Alexander looks like a future big time back, and he's likely to play this year. Another freshman, Dameian Vallery, had a slight muscle pull early, but he also looks to have great potential.

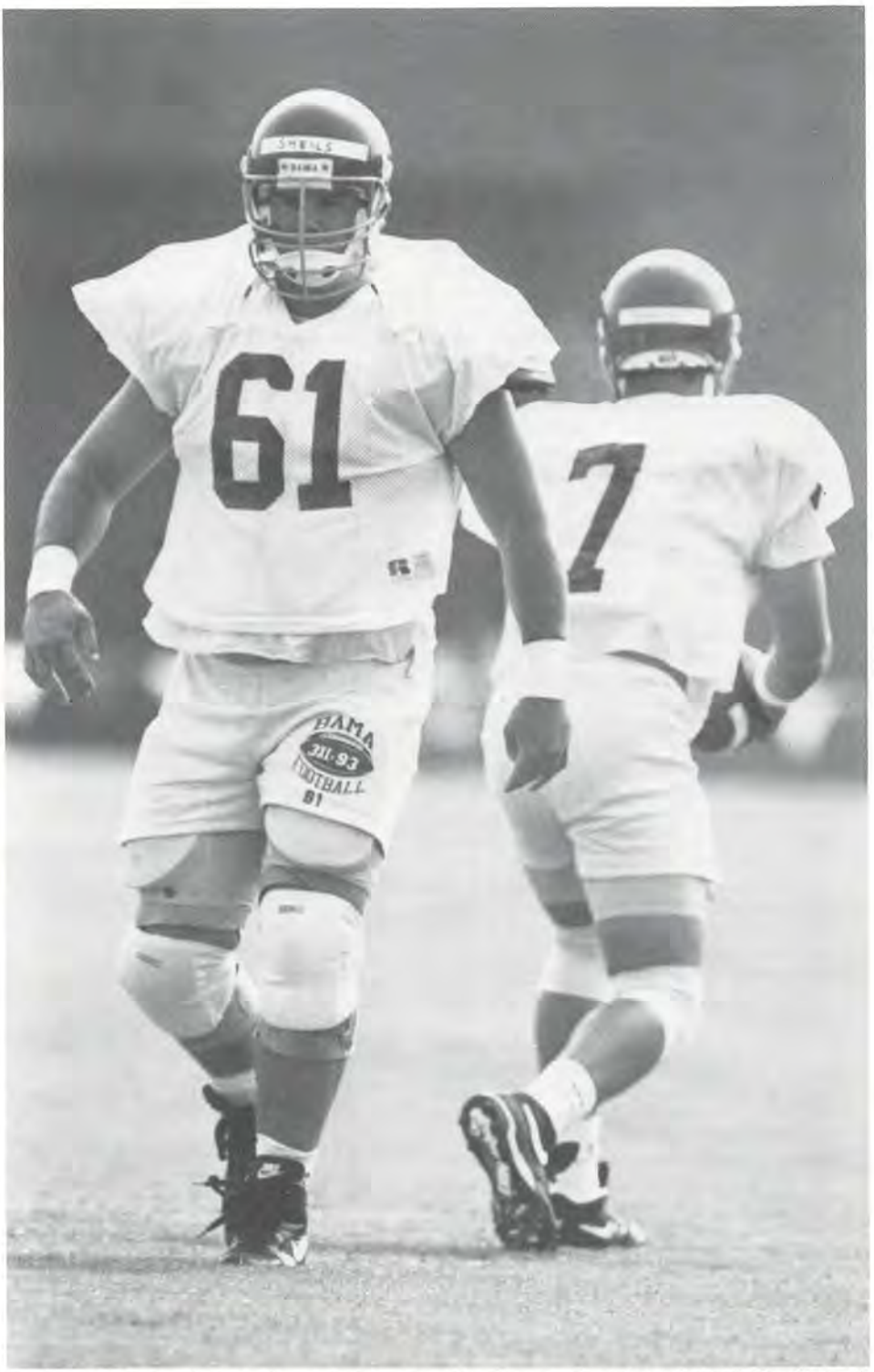
Last year it was common to hear that Alabama won in spite of quarterback Jay Barker, not because of him. Barker, the team's hardest worker, appears to be much-improved going into his junior season. And he'd better be, because sophomore Brian Burgdorf certainly is. Alabama may not play more than two quarterbacks, but the third one will be one of two freshman signees, probably Freddie Kitchens, but possibly Lance Tucker.

Five members of Alabama's 1992 defensive squad are now on NFL rosters, three of them picked in the first round. But no one believes Alabama will have a great drop off defensively.

There was some early moaning from the coaches about a lack of depth at outside linebacker, but when you start with Lemanski Hall you start way ahead of everyone else. Will Brown, who made the same move as Hall (from strong safety to outside linebacker), is able to play both sides. And André Royal has extraordinary pass-rush talent. Additionally, John Tanks has come on very strong, as has freshman Paul Pickett. Redshirt freshman Darrell Blackburn should be a factor, but hasn't been yet.

Michael Rogers has made a complete recovery from his automobile accident and, as one of his teammates said, "He'll bring the hat," meaning he gets to the play, then makes an authoritative tackle. John Walters, who got some playing time as a freshman last year, has taken advantage of an opening at the other inside linebacker spot. He'll be challenged when Mario Morris is back to full speed. Morris had an appendectomy late this summer. However, Morris should be back quicker than expected. While early reports said he would miss the first two games, he had a modern procedure, akin to arthroscopic knee surgery, and so he wasn't cut open. He spent only one night in the hospital and took part in limited drills from the first day of practice. Soph Jeff Torrence, redshirt freshman Lamont Floyd and true freshmen Fernando Davis and Tyrell Buckner are all solid inside linebackers.

No one would suggest that Alabama has defensive ends the quality of John Copeland and Eric Curry, both high first round draft choices after last season. But it's not chopped liver. Jeremy Nunley, who was the top backup at all three down line spots a year ago, would have probably started for just about every team in the country as a junior. He'll be at right end. Elverett Brown was a backup nose tackle last year, but had an excellent spring at left end. At nose tackle Alabama has a great one in James Gregory. One of Alabama's most improved players from last year appears to be Damiean Jeffries, who is backing up Nunley. Ozell Powell should be the first man behind Brown, while Kelvin Moore is making strides after shifting from linebacker in the spring. Gregory is backed by Laron White, still a little raw. And the



An improved Jay Barker at quarterback has the luxury of working behind the likes of All-SEC center Tobie Sheils.

Barry Fikes Photo

Tide is also looking at Kendrick Burton, who had to sit out last year, at nose tackle.

Assistant Coach Bill Oliver doesn't have as many players as he'd like to have in the secondary, but the ones he does have are high quality. If Alabama had selected a most valuable player last fall, it likely would have been cornerback Antonio Langham, who is back for his senior season. He is so good he may make an all-star out of right cornerback Tommy Johnson. Most teams aren't going to challenge Langham, but going after Johnson could be hazardous to their health, too. The starting safeties from last year, Sam Shade at strong and Chris Donnelly at weak, are back and both are top performers. There's good depth at the safety spots with Blair Canale, Eric Turner and freshman Andre Short. And Willie Gaston, who is the nickel back as well as top backup at cornerback, can also play free safety. Freshman Cedric Samuel and some top walkons, Mickey Conn and Michael Ausmus, will get playing time.

The kicking teams are made up primarily of fast players on coverage, big players on field goal and extra point protection, and sure-handed sprinters on returns, and Alabama has them in abundance. But when one thinks of the special teams, one thinks primarily of the kickers, and Bama returns both placekicker Michael Proctor and punter Bryne Diehl. Kicking was a priority in early Bama practices this fall and Stallings expects it to be a solid part of Alabama's game.

Michael Proctor returns for his second year as Bama's placekicker.
Barry Fikes Photo

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1993 Alabama Football Roster

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No.	Name, Pos.	Ht.	Wt.	Cl.	Exp.	Hometown
1	Marcell West, fl	5-11	177	Fr	RS	Niceville, Fla.
1	Alex LaBellman, pk	6-0	180	So	Sq	Maitland, Fla.
2	David Palmer, fl	5-9	170	Jr	2L	Birmingham
2	Stephen Foster, s	5-9	170	Fr.	Tr	Palm Harbor, Fla.
3	Michael Proctor, pk	5-11	183	So.	1L	Pelham
3	Darren Thompson, ilb	5-8	180	So.	Sq	Huntsville
4	Matt Wethington, pk	5-11	176	Jr.	1L	Titusville, Fla.
4	Keith Martin, p	6-0	180	Fr.	HS	Town Creek
5	Tony Johnson, te	6-5	248	So.	1L	Como, Miss.
5	Tracy High, cb	5-9	175	So.	Sq	Pontotoc, Miss.
6	Lance Tucker, qb	6-0	175	Fr.	HS	Fayette
6	Hayden Stockton, p	6-0	193	Fr.	RS	Double Springs
7	Jay Barker, qb	6-3	215	Jr.	2L	Trussville
7	Mike Reynolds, s	5-11	176	So.	Sq	Centerville
8	Jason Jack, qb	6-1	180	Sr.	Sq	Oxford
8	Chris Wittel, cb	5-7	185	Sr.	Sq	Canton, Ohio
9	Freddie Kitchens, qb	6-3	210	Fr.	HS	Attalla
10	Tommy Johnson, cb	5-10	180	Jr.	2L	Niceville, Fla.
10	David Goss, qb	5-11	175	Fr.	HS	Warner Robins, Ga.
11	Lemanski Hall, olb	6-1	227	Sr.	3L	Valley
11	Wade Roe, pk	5-11	174	Fr.	RS	Tuscaloosa
12	Bryne Diehl, p	6-3	215	Jr.	1L	Oakman
12	Shane Crask, qb	6-4	194	Fr.	RS	Athens
13	Cedric Samuel, cb	5-9	170	Fr.	HS	Demopolis
13	Mark Grobe, qb	6-1	200	Fr.	RS	Cullman
14	Brian Burgdorf, qb	6-2	192	So.	1L	Cedartown, Ga.
14	Richard Bell, ilb	5-10	189	Sr.	Sq	Detroit, Mich.
15	Travis Crim, s	5-9	177	Fr.	HS	Clanton
16	Josh Niblett, fb	6-2	208	So.	Sq	Demopolis
17	Will Brown, olb	6-1	210	Jr.	2L	Syracuse, N.Y.
17	William Watts, pk	6-1	180	Fr.	HS	Pleasant Grove
18	Lorenzo Cole, fl	6-11	183	Sr.	1L	Florence
18	Jeremy Downey, s	6-0	187	Fr.	RS	Irvington
19	Chad Key, se	6-4	210	So.	Sq	Parrish
19	J.J. Adams, p	6-1	165	Jr.	Sq	Katy, Texas
20	Sherman Williams, rb	5-10	193	Jr.	2L	Mobile
20	Adrian Watson, cb	5-9	180	Fr.	HS	Gatlinburg, Tenn.
21	Chris Donelly, s	6-0	180	Sr.	1L	Germantown, Tenn.
21	Brian Boyington, rb	5-11	192	Fr.	RS	Sterrett
22	Willie Gaston, s-db	5-11	183	Jr.	1L	Mobile
22	Michael Cassady, se	6-1	173	Fr.	HS	Florala
23	Andre Short, ss	5-11	205	Fr.	HS	LaGrange, Ga.
24	Blair Canale, s	6-3	199	Fr.	RS	Memphis
25	Dameian Vallery, rb	6-2	200	Fr.	HS	Aldine, Texas
25	Jason Dillon, ss	6-2	195	Fr.	HS	Rome, Ga.
26	Michael Ausmus, s	5-9	178	So.	1L	Mobile
26	Carl Albright, h	5-9	135	So.	Sq	Tuscaloosa
27	Danny Davis, ss	6-2	213	Jr.	1L	Memphis
27	Michael Hoven, rb	5-10	207	Sr.	Sq	Citronelle
28	Brian Steger, fb	6-3	210	Fr.	HS	New Market
28	Randy Riley, ss	6-1	200	Fr.	HS	New Brockton
29	Rock Woody, cb	5-10	180	Jr.	1L	Springville
29	Tracy Cummings, fb	6-0	235	Fr.	HS	Jonesboro, Ga.
30	Taurus Turner, fb	6-1	200	Fr.	HS	Fort Payne
31	Sam Shade, ss	6-1	190	Jr.	2L	Birmingham
31	Marcus Moring, fb	6-2	215	Jr.	Sq	Columbus, Ga.
32	Curtis Alexander, rb	6-1	195	Fr.	HS	Memphis
32	Kevin Komisar, c	5-10	200	So.	Sq	Nashville
33	Chris Anderson, rb	5-9	187	Sr.	3L	Huntsville
33	Hunter Christian, olb	6-1	210	Jr.	TR	Tuscaloosa
34	Harold Swopes, fb	5-11	226	Sr.	Sq	Decatur
34	Marlon Reyes, ss	5-10	176	Fr.	HS	Mexico City
35	Derrick Cunningham, cb	5-8	150	Fr.	HS	Pelham
36	André Royal, olb	6-2	219	Jr.	1L	Northport
36	Scott Wilson, fb	6-2	220	So.	Sq	Tuscaloosa
37	Kevin Lee, se	6-1	183	Sr.	3L	Mobile
37	John Hutt, ilb	6-0	216	Jr.	Sq	Tuscaloosa
38	Patrick Hape, te	6-4	240	Fr.	HS	Killen
38	Randy Gartman, s	5-11	175	Sr.	Sq	Chicago
39	Eric Turner, ss	6-1	200	So.	1L	Fort Payne
40	Mickey Conn,cb	5-10	175	Jr.	1L	Snellville, Ga.
40	Cornelius Wesley, fb	6-1	213	Jr.	Sq	Orlando, Fla.
41	Ralph Staten, olb	6-3	200	Fr.	HS	Semmes
41	Anthony Burroughs, fb	5-11	208	So.	Sq	Rogersville
42	Paul Pickett, olb	6-3	230	Fr.	HS	LaGrange, Ga.
43	Antonio Langham, cb	6-1	170	Sr.	3L	Town Creek
44	Darrell Blackburn, olb	6-4	224	Fr.	RS	Huntsville
44	Rondi Gibson, rb	5-10	185	Jr.	Tr	Brewton
45	Tarrant Lynch, fb	6-1	224	Jr.	2L	Town Creek
45	Brad Ranson, ilb	5-11	215	So.	HS	Huntsville
46	John Tanks, olb	6-4	226	Fr.	RS	Butler
47	Jackson Lowery, ss	6-2	195	Jr.	Sq	Huntsville
48	Jay Brannen, olb	6-1	226	Jr.	Sq	Gainesville, Fla.
49	Jeff Foshee, ilb	5-9	207	Jr.	2L	Millbrook
50	Joel Holliday, ot	6-4	275	Fr.	HS	Six Mile, S.C.
50	Howie Fell, ilb	6-1	225	So.	Sq	Birmingham
51	Laron White, nt	6-2	272	Fr.	RS	Courtland
52	Michael Rogers, ilb	6-1	232	Jr.	2L	Luverne
52	Chris Sidle, og	6-2	257	Fr.	RS	Pleasant Grove
53	Jeff Torrence, ilb	6-1	230	So.	1L	Atmore
53	Darrell Smith, c	6-2	265	Fr.	RS	Munford
54	Chad Gladden, c	6-3	279	Jr.	1L	Centre
54	Anthony Dowdell, olb	6-1	226	Fr.	RS	Columbus, Ga.
55	Fernano Davis, ilb	6-3	225	Fr.	HS	Aberdeen, Miss.
55	Michael Favors, og	6-2	267	So.	Sq	Mobile
56	Chris Jordan, ot	6-6	290	Fr.	HS	Jackson
56	Jason Cole, olb	6-2	209	Jr.	Sq	Albertville
57	Lamont Floyd, ilb	6-2	240	Fr.	RS	Orange Park, Fla.
57	Chad Sheley, c	6-0	230	So.	HS	Middletown, Ohio
58	Mario Morris, ilb	6-0	220	Jr.	2L	Decatur
58	Kirk Lawson, ot	6-5	270	Jr.	Sq	Florence
59	John Clay, og	6-2	273	Sr.	3L	Nashville
60	Joey Harville, ot	6-5	285	Jr.	2L	Moulton
60	D.J. Jones, olb	6-0	210	Fr.	HS	Valley
61	Tobie Sheils, c	6-3	250	Sr.	3L	Fairhope
61	Chris Siebert, ilb	6-1	185	Fr.	HS	Union Hill
62	William Barger, og	6-3	287	Sr.	3L	Birmingham
63	Matt Hammond, ot	6-3	270	Sr.	3L	Fort Payne
64	Maurice Belser, og	6-2	289	So.	1L	Cordova
65	Napoleon Folks, og	6-3	290	Jr.	Sq	Montgomery
66	Tim Barnett, c	6-5	287	So.	Sq	Bear Creek
67	Dennis Deason, c	6-1	270	Sr.	1L	Birmingham
68	Will Friend, og	6-3	270	Fr.	HS	Philadelphia, Miss.
69	Jon Stevenson, og	6-3	275	Jr.	2L	Memphis
70	Roy Segrest, ot	6-5	275	So.	Sq	Waycross, Ga.
71	John Causey, c	6-1, 260		Fr.	Sq	Hayneville
72	Pete DiMario, ot	6-5	270	Fr.	RS	Tuscaloosa
72	Jason Milner, de	6-4	260	Jr.	Sq	Broken Arrow, Okla.
73	Jeremy Nunley, de	6-5	254	Sr.	3L	Winchester, Tenn.
73	Scott Mullenix, og	6-3	270	Sr.	Sq	Jacksonville, Fla.
74	Kareem McNeal, ot	6-5	287	So.	1L	Tuskegee
75	Shannon Brown, ot	6-5	263	So.	1L	Millbrook
76	Elverett Brown, de	6-5	266	Jr.	2L	Montgomery
76	Jeff McCullough, ot	6-4	255	So.	Sq	Oneonta
77	Roosevelt Patterson, ot	6-4	290	Sr.	2L	Mobile
78	Ozell Powell, de	6-5	275	Fr.	RS	Greenville
78	Bryan Thornton, ot	6-7	280	So.	1L	Mobile
78	Mike Williams, te	6-2	242	So.	Sq	Littleton, Colo.
79	Jeremy Pennington, og	6-3	270	Fr.	RS	Vernon
79	Michael Ray, nt	6-5	305	Fr.	HS	Boaz
80	Toderick Malone, se	6-0	185	So.	HS	Attalla
80	Lee Ferguson, olb	6-1	192	Fr.	HS	Albertville
81	Edgar Walker, de	6-4	240	Fr.	HS	Dothan
81	Chester Lewis, sn-te	6-4	236	Fr.	RS	Tuscaloosa
82	Rick Brown, fl	6-0	175	Jr.	2L	Fort Worth, Texas
83	Will Knowlton, olb	6-3	217	So.	Sq	Fayette
83	Kevin Sherrer, te	6-4	235	Fr.	HS	Cleveland
84	Roman Colburn, fl	6-0	180	Fr.	1L	Fort Payne
84	Todd Payton, olb	6-1	205	Fr.	HS	Clanton
85	Curtis Brown, se	6-3	189	Jr.	2L	John's Island, S.C.
86	DeLan Trimble, olb	6-1	235	Jr.	Sq	Cullman
86	Thad Abernathy, se	6-0	160	Fr.	HS	Enterprise
87	Matthew Pine, sn-te	6-3	221	Sr.	3L	Gadsden
88	Marion Jackson, fl	5-11	150	Fr.	HS	Atlanta
89	Kris Mangum, te	6-5	256	So.	1L	Magee, Miss.
90	John Walters, ilb	6-2	225	So.	1L	Richardson, Texas
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91	T.K. Bowman, fl	6-1	165	Fr.	HS	Bigbee
92	Tyrell Buckner, ilb	6-1	235	Fr.	HS	Denison, Texas
92	Bud Coleman, og	6-4	245	Fr.	HS	Geneva
93	Steve Thompson, de	6-5	270	Fr.	HS	Birmingham
94	Kendrick Burton, de	6-6	290	So.	HS	Hartselle
95	Kelvin Moore, de	6-3	240	Fr.	RS	Daphne
97	Vann Bodden, de	6-4	248	So.	Sq	Moss Point, Miss.
98	James Gregory, nt	6-4	280	Sr.	3L	St. Louis
99	Nick Wright, de	6-6	240	Fr.	Tr	Pell City

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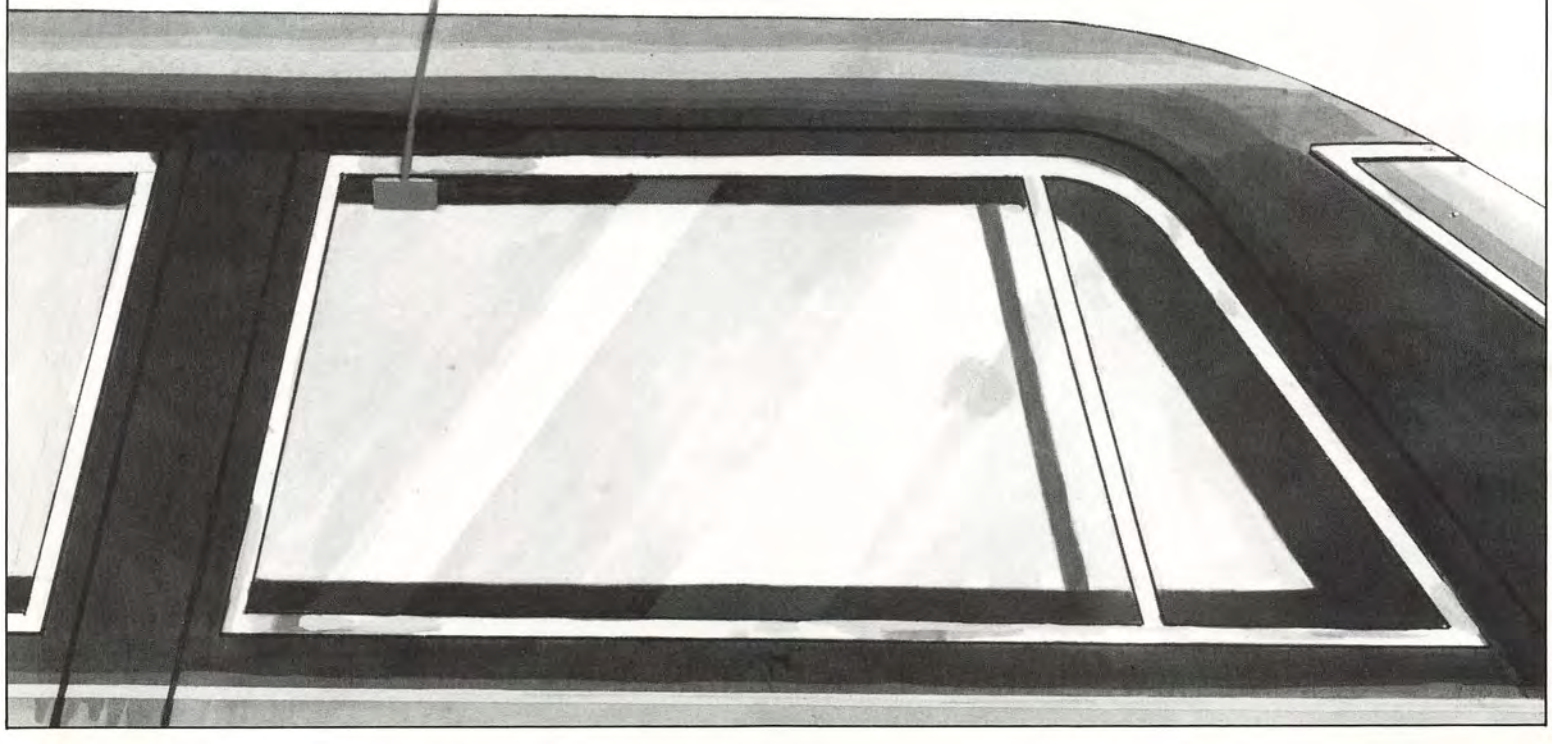

Roosevelt Patterson:

Looking For A Fast Finish

by John Barnes

Senior tackle has history of success and wants last season to be best

There are a number of different ways to measure the mark of a champion. For Alabama offensive tackle Roosevelt Patterson, a national championship at two different levels of play is a pretty good indicator.

A starting offensive lineman for Vigor High School's 1988 state championship team, Patterson and the Wolves were tabbed by ESPN as the nation's best high school squad and are widely regarded as the state's best-ever prep team.

Four years later, Patterson was the starting right tackle on Alabama's 13-0 national championship team. "In both cases, I was surrounded by good players," said the 6-4, 290-pound senior. "With great players and great coaches, there's no limit to what you can do." Patterson, along with teammate Kevin Lee, are the only Tiders to lay claim to this honor.

"I think it (high school championship) may have helped me as far as my attitude and preparation," he said. "But the level of competition is so different, there really isn't much comparison. The difference between a high school team and the Miami Hurricanes is like night and day. But in both cases, we had great team unity, sort of like a big family. That helps you to concentrate and to win games."

Regarded as the state's premier offensive line prospect in 1988, Patterson never wavered in his desire to play for Alabama. "I guess I've been an Alabama fan all my life," he said. "I took a visit to Florida State and a couple other places. There were a few other schools on my mind. Auburn wasn't one of them. I don't like Auburn. Alabama was always right there. When I took my visit here, I felt real comfortable, just like I was at home."

Although Patterson's exploits on the gridiron were well thought of, his perfor-

Roosevelt Patterson had a big game in the Sugar Bowl, but Alabama coaches are stressing that one game does not a career make. Patterson has great potential, but hasn't always lived up to it.
Barry Fikes Photo

mance in the classroom left something to be desired. Unable to qualify academically in 1989, Patterson joined the ranks of Proposition 48 freshmen, losing a year of eligibility. Unable to practice with the team, he turned his attention to the books, made his grades, and qualified himself for Bama's 1990 campaign.

"That first year was tough," he said. "I had a lot of downs. There were times when I just wanted to pack up and go home. I won't say it was a good experience, but it made me realize the importance of school. That's really why we're all here–to get an education. If you want to do it on the field, you gotta do it in the classroom first."

Although eligible in 1990, considerable depth along the offensive front forced Patterson to take a redshirt year. "Coming back after being away from football for a year was pretty tough," he said. "That first week of two-a-days was rugged. I was out of shape and a little rusty. I didn't know at the time that I would be redshirted, but getting to practice and live in the dorm made me feel like part of the team."

In 1991 "Rosie" finally got his chance. Working primarily as a backup to then-right tackle Jon Stevenson, he played in every game, making steady improvement. He started both the Tennessee and Auburn games, two of the Tide's biggest wins in 1991. "I feel like that was a good year for me," he said. "I spent most of my time trying to learn the plays and fit into the system. We won all our games except one and I feel like I made a pretty good contribution."

Patterson is the first to admit that Bama's 1992 campaign exceeded his wildest expectations. Starting all but the Arkansas and Mississippi State contests, Rosie showed flashes of what could be a very promising career. Spearheading the Tide's power running attack, Patterson, along with Jon Stevenson, Tobie Sheils, George Wilson and Matt Hammond, helped establish one of the Southeastern Conference's top offensive lines

Patterson's steady improvement reached its pinnacle in the Sugar Bowl. Leading the way against Miami's vaunted defensive front, Patterson played perhaps the best

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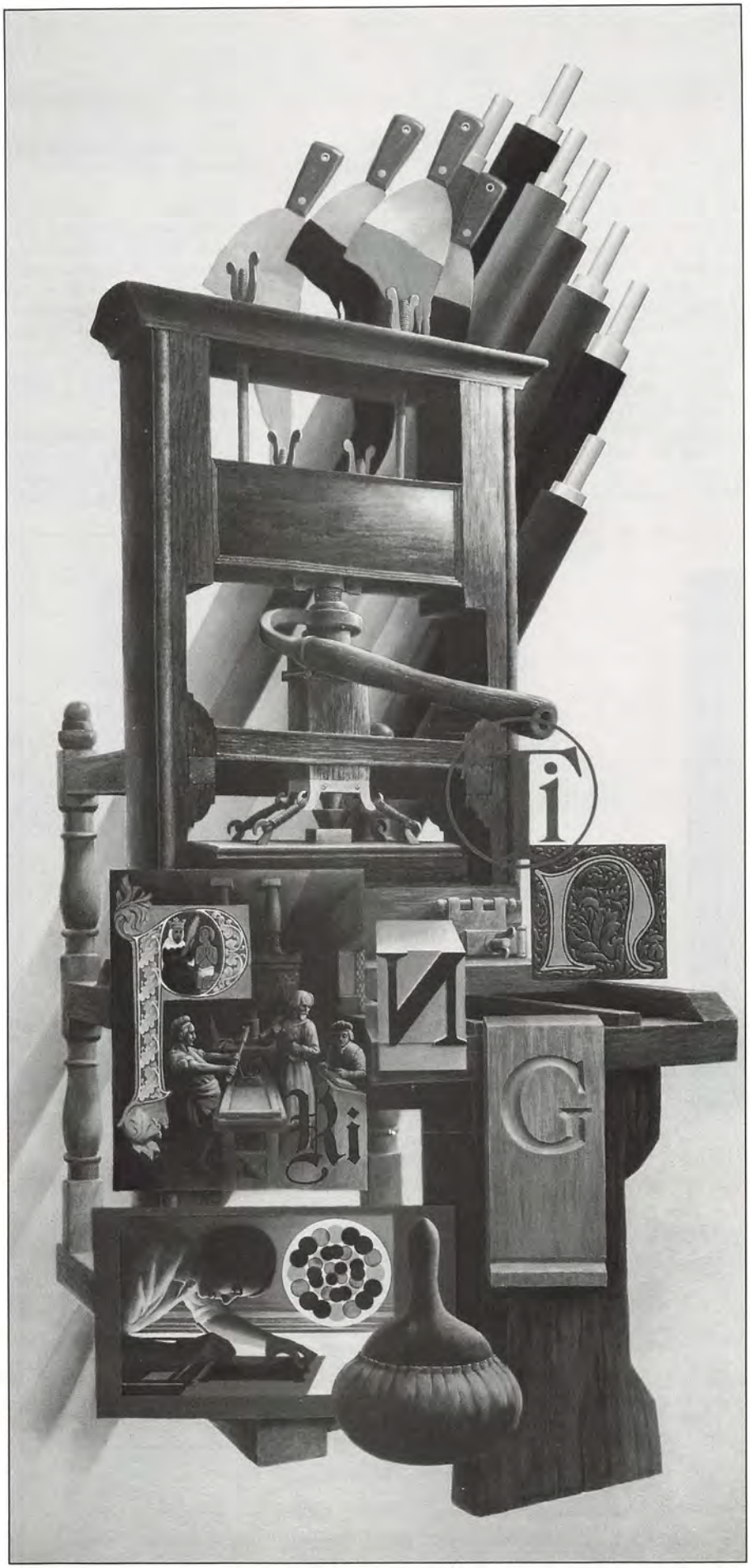

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game of his career, clearing the way for 267 rushing yards and 36 minutes of possession time. At one point during the Tide's final touchdown drive, Rosie was more than 25 yards downfield, clearing the way for tailback Derrick Lassic.

"I've never wanted to win a game as bad as I did the Sugar Bowl," said Patterson. "All week, we listened to them (Miami) talk trash. If they knew how much it motivated me and the rest of the guys, they probably would have kept their mouths shut."

Patterson recalls his much-publicized run-in with the Hurricanes' Rohan Marley in New Orleans: "A few of us were walking through the French Quarter and we kept hearing someone behind us saying 'What are you doing here? Why don't you go home.' We kept on walking and they kept on talking. Finally we stopped and there was little Bob Marley. He said, 'You must be an offensive lineman, you big, fat slob.' I said, 'Look, we aren't going to settle this in the street, but come Friday night, we'll settle it in the 'Dome.' We did. I wanted to hit him real bad during the game, but I never got a chance since he only played two or three minutes."

Bama Assistant Coach Danny Pearman, who tutors offensive tackles, agrees the Sugar Bowl was Patterson's best game, but warns that one game does not a star make. "Rosie has loads of potential, but he needs to realize that he can't base a career on one game," said Pearman. "The word 'potential' can be Rosie's best friend or his worst enemy. He could be the best offensive tackle in the SEC, one of the best in the nation. Rosie has a great sense of humor and that keeps everybody loose. He's going to have to learn to be a little more serious at practice, though. As is the case with all our linemen, he's got to work on his pass protection. It is essential that we protect our passer this year."

As Bama prepares to open defense of its national title, Patterson's senior year could bring one of the best offensive lines in the history of the school. With only George Wilson moving on, The Tide will return its most experienced offensive line in over a decade. "Our offensive line is gonna be big-time," said Patterson. "There's always room for improvement, especially in pass protection, but our run blocking is going to be great. We're the type of guys who will do whatever it takes to win. This may be the best offensive line ever at the University of Alabama."

Providing the Bama front stays healthy, the potential is there for the Tide to move the football at will. Pearman is confident, but unwilling to say the Tide line will be the school's best ever. "Alabama has built its reputation on defense and running the football," he said. "However, with the narrower hash marks, we'll have to throw the football with some regularity. The mark of a good offensive line lies in its ability to protect the passer and run the football."

Few would argue that one of the reasons for Alabama's recent success is team unity. "All the guys on the line are close on and off the field," said Patterson. "We know what to expect from each other and try to play every game as a unit. Coach Stallings makes sure of that. We know each other's tendencies, and although we each have our individual assignments, we all share a common goal–to win football games."

As for life after football, Patterson much prefers to live in the now. "I've thought a little about what I'll do when I leave Alabama," he said. "I would love to play professional football, but a blown knee or something like that could end those plans in a hurry, so you have to think about the future. I plan to graduate with a criminal justice degree. Maybe I'll join the FBI or something if football doesn't work out. But really, right now I'm just concerned with getting through fall practice and beating Tulane."

With high school and college national championships under his belt, one might wonder what Rosie could do for an encore. "Win another one, man," he said. "We believe we can win them all again and that's the most important thing."

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Rick Brown:

Looking For Lady Luck To Return

by Rush Garner

After a nice start, junior flanker has had mostly downs because of injuries

In the world of college football there is a "What have you done for me lately?" attitude among many fans. For the last seven months Alabama fans have savored the championship like a hog loves his morning mud. It's hard to believe, but three games into the 1990 season there were as many questions as today there are cheers.

"That was the most difficult time for me because I had turned down other offers to come play at Alabama, and here we are 0-3," Tide wide receiver Rick Brown said of that 1990 season, his first at Bama. Brown, a junior from Fort Worth, Texas, said, "I was thinking to myself, 'All those people who said it was a mistake to sign with Alabama were right.' " It is easy to see how someone that age nearly a thousand miles from home could be discouraged.

Alabama's losses in those first three games were all by the barest of mistakes, most of them in the kicking game. Nevertheless, an 0-3 start hadn't occurred at Alabama since 1956.

But since that start, Rick Brown and Alabama fans everywhere are aware there have been only three other losses since 1990, none in the past 23 games, including all 13 in last year's national championship season. The program has regained its national stature under Head Coach Gene Stallings, cause for great celebration among the Crimson Tide faithful. But for Rick Brown, the past three years has been only a prelude to what he expects to be his contribution to Bama success.

Primarily because of a series of nagging injuries, Brown has had doubts about whether he could play at this level. After being redshirted in that 1990 season, his first season of playing couldn't have started better. In the first game of the 1991 season against Temple, a batted pass turned into a quick six for the 5-11, 165-pounder. His first career reception was also his first career touchdown. But Lady Luck's touch on Brown was short-lived.

Two games later Brown suffered a leg injury against Georgia. The initial diagnosis was a deep bruise. However, it was later determined he had suffered slight nerve damage. And matters were complicated when Brown tried to resume activity too quickly, he said. With his leg bothering him and his confidence low, Brown hobbled through the 1991 campaign with a total of only four receptions for 59 yards, even though he played in all 11 regular season games and the Blockbuster Bowl game against Colorado.

"The leg injury was all the worse because I lost confidence in my ability to run," Brown said. "In the back of my mind I was always thinking about the pain shooting through the leg. And when I would need to turn it on, instead I was holding back, even though I didn't want to."

The speed problem has been overcome. Latest testings have had him in the 4.5 range in the 40-yard dash, and that's more than acceptable range for a wide receiver.

But that wasn't to be the last injury for Brown. In practice prior to the opening game last season, Brown suffered a back injury. He said he noticed it was still hurting a few days after the injury, and soon after that he began to suffer back spasms. He tried to persevere in spite of the pain, but was unable to see extensive action except in two games. Against Arkansas he played a season-high 26 snaps and against Southern Miss he was in for 21 offensive plays. His playing time in 1992 was limited to just six games and he did not have a pass reception.

Ironically, another injury to another Brown may have pushed Rick Brown up on the depth chart this year. Although Rick Brown is primarily a flanker, the injury to split end Curt Brown may open up some playing time for Rick at that spot. Curt suffered a knee injury in a summer basketball game and had to under go surgery. He is listed as doubtful for this season, or, at least, the first half of the season.

"The loss of Curtis puts pressure on everyone to raise his game," Rick (no relation to Curt) said. "That means that some of the new guys like Marcel West and Toderick Malone are going to get a chance to show what they can do sooner than might have been expected."

Rick Brown believes nothing is standing between him and a productive season. His injuries are in the past.

Brown also knows he has to work hard in order to avoid injuries. "I know I have to work out and stay in shape, because I've got guys coming at me who are 15 to 20 pounds heavier than I am, and I take a

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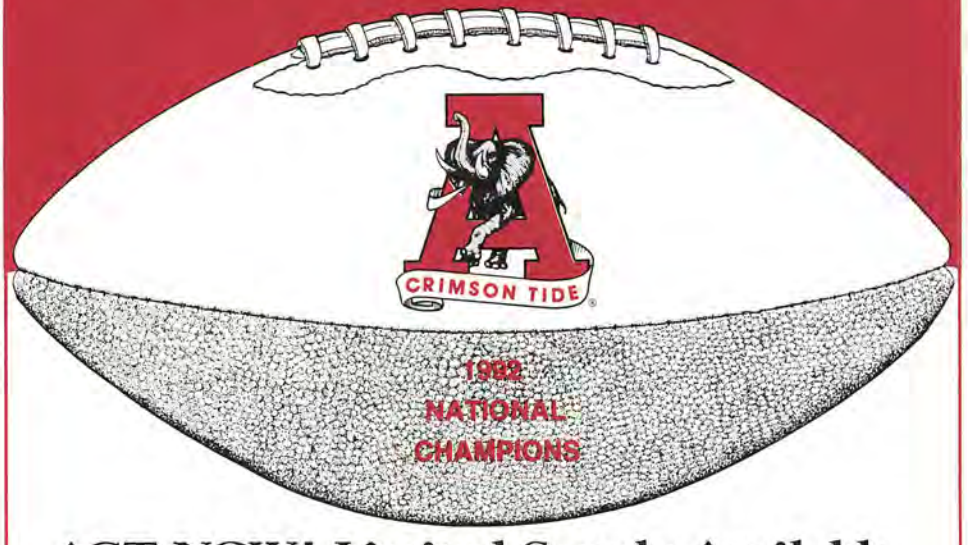

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pretty good pounding," he said. The coaches agree. "Rick had a good spring and he really came along, but he has had health problems," said Assistant Coach Woody McCorvey. "So the main thing is if he can stay healthy."

Not only does Brown exhibit a good example on the field, but off the field he tries to stay away from distractions. "You won't see me going out a lot at night," he said. "I know a lot of guys enjoy their free time in different ways, but I like to just relax around the dorm."

McCorvey, who coaches Alabama's wide receivers, said, "Rick has always been a hard worker, and that is what you like to see in your players. He's also a very intelligent player, and has proved very reliable at the flanker position. We never have doubted Rick's ability to catch the ball. He has the talent to make things happen at the flanker position." That is an encouraging endorsement considering Brown's competition this year. The man in front of Rick Brown is one of Alabama's most talented football players ever, David Palmer. While no one questions that Palmer is the main man at the flanker position, Brown knows he has what it takes to be a winning football player, too.

The flanker is usually a smaller, quicker, more athletic performer than the split end, who is generally taller and more physical. To play flanker, a man must be versatile. Although job one is pass routes, a flanker also has occasion to function as a running back, either by going in motion to disguise formations, or even being called on to run the reverse.

Brown's work on the practice field is heavy as a pass catcher. In addition to working closely with Tide quarterbacks, he catches at least 100 balls each day from a ball-throwing machine. "We don't have enough quarterbacks to throw each wide receiver as many passes as we need to catch, which is why we supplement our work with the machine," Brown said. "But there is no substitute for working with the man who is going to be throwing you the ball. Receiving is more than just the mechanics of watching the ball in, catching it, then protecting it. There's a chemistry between quarterback and wide receiver, a sixth sense kind of thing that comes only from repetitions on the practice field."

Brown said, "I think we have a lot of talented guys at the quarterback position, but talent alone will not get the job done. And that's why I respect Jay Barker so much. Day-in and day-out he works as hard as anyone on the team."

Brown's talents have not yet been showcased as he would like, but he has been a part of a national championship team. That by itself has put the lid on any questions his friends back in Fort Worth might have had. Brown remembers one incident in which his friends told him he "didn't have a chance to play at Alabama." He remembers telling them he would have to pay his dues, "But I also told them I would definitely play at Alabama."

Rick Brown had a great experience with his first Alabama pass reception, a touchdown in the Tide's opening game against Temple in 1991. He hopes to be full speed this year.
University of Alabama Photo by Kent Gidley

Brown said, "I've waited my turn. I've sat and watched. Now I want to come in and have a good year and show people who Rick Brown is and what he can do." That attitude has been a Rick Brown characteristic his whole life.

At his junior high school, all eighth graders were required to play two sports. Rick's first love was basketball, so that choice was easy. But Brown couldn't decide on his other sport, so the physical education instructors made the choice for him. He was made water boy for the football team.

"All those big guys out there would yell at me: 'Come here, boy! I'm thirsty.' It was always Boy This and Boy That. I got sick of hearing them put me down, so I went out for the team. Within two days I was the starting cornerback."

Although Brown is known now for his ability as a football player, throughout his high school career he was really more highly-regarded as a basketball player. On the football field at Brewer High in Fort Worth he played both flanker and safety. As a senior he caught 33 passes for 740 yards and eight touchdowns. As a defender, he had 16 career interceptions, including six his senior year (which he returned for 132 yards). But he was also a two-time all-district selection as a point guard for the basketball team. Even today Rick's basketball background is evident as he is an exceptional leaper.

"The first couple of years in high school I played football until basketball season started, and then I would quit football to concentrate on basketball, because I didn't think I could play college football," Rick said. But by the time Brown was a senior, he was receiving mail from college football recruiting offices. His new attention to football, along with the time spent in recruiting, made his senior season in basketball a difficult one. But by then Brown knew his future was in football.

Alabama wasn't the only school that came calling, but most of the others were smaller schools promising immediate playing time. An excellent student, he also had the option of the Air Force Academy. Alabama promised only a chance, but Alabama was the big name school with scholarship offer in hand.

Rick said he thinks that Alabama found out about him in something of a roundabout manner. An opposing high school coach and admirer of then-new Alabama Head Coach Gene Stallings, told Stallings he might have his staff take a look at Brown. Tide coaches got film and liked what they saw.

Now Rick Brown wants Bama coaches and teammates and fans to like what they see of him on the football field.

The Quarterbacks:

Barker, Burgdorf Compete

by Kirk McNair

Junior Barker , sophomore Burgdorf believe both are better for the competition

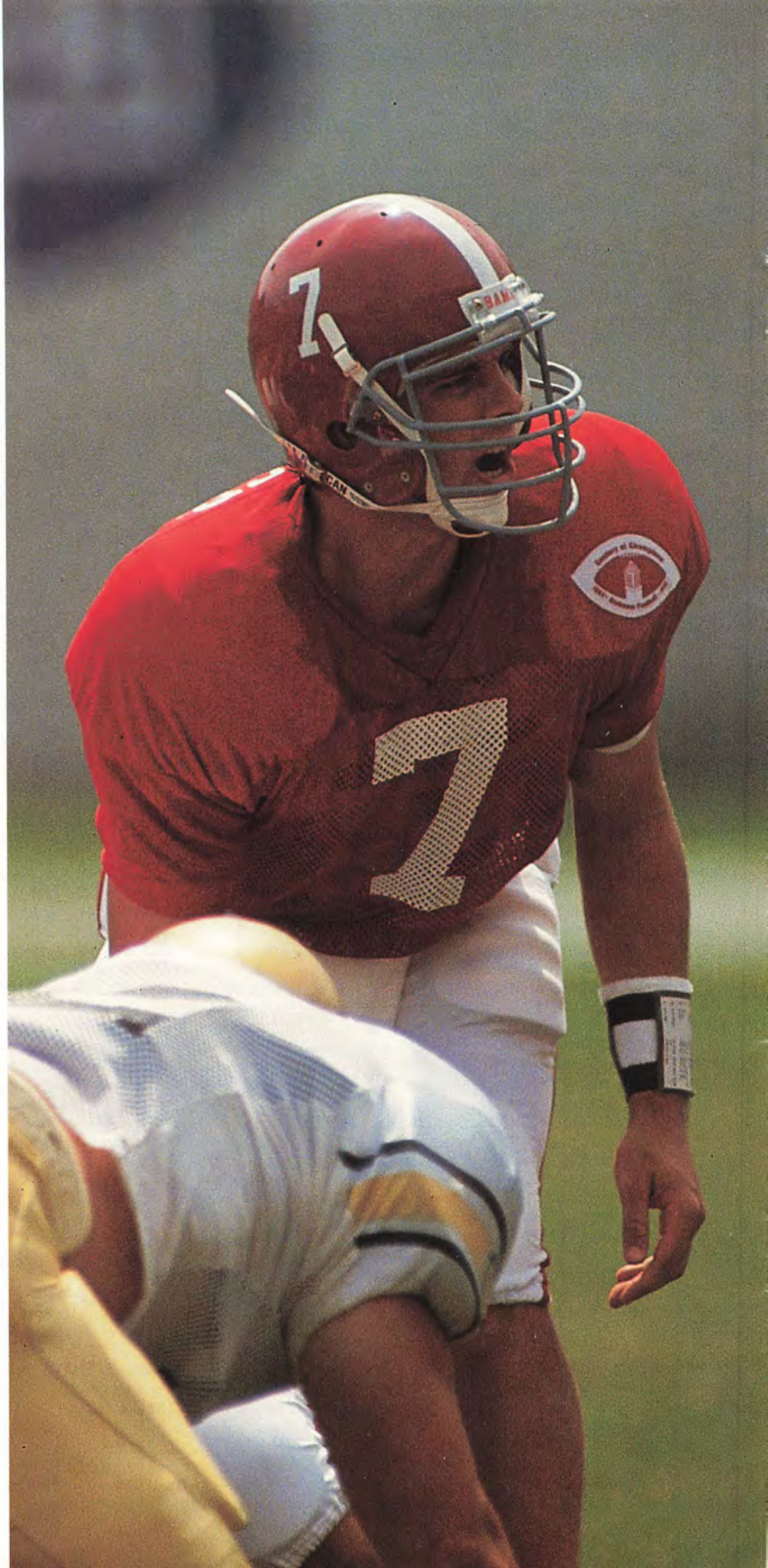
Competition is a given in football. Certainly, teams compete against one another, the offense of one team competing against the defense of another. But there is also competition within the team, competition for spots on the depth chart. The ideal spot on the depth chart for a football player is at the top. While it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out who will be number one at some positions, other starting jobs are waiting to be won.

Alabama Head Coach Gene Stallings operates under the proven football maxim that a player has to win his job each day in practice. Stallings said earlier this year that Jay Barker, the starter at Alabama for the past 17 games–all of them victories–goes into preseason work as the number one quarterback. But Stallings has also cautioned that backup Brian Burgdorf is working hard to win the job.

In some quarters that has been labeled controversy. In fact, it is nothing more than healthy competition, the same type competition going on at left guard or safety or punter but with far more attention.

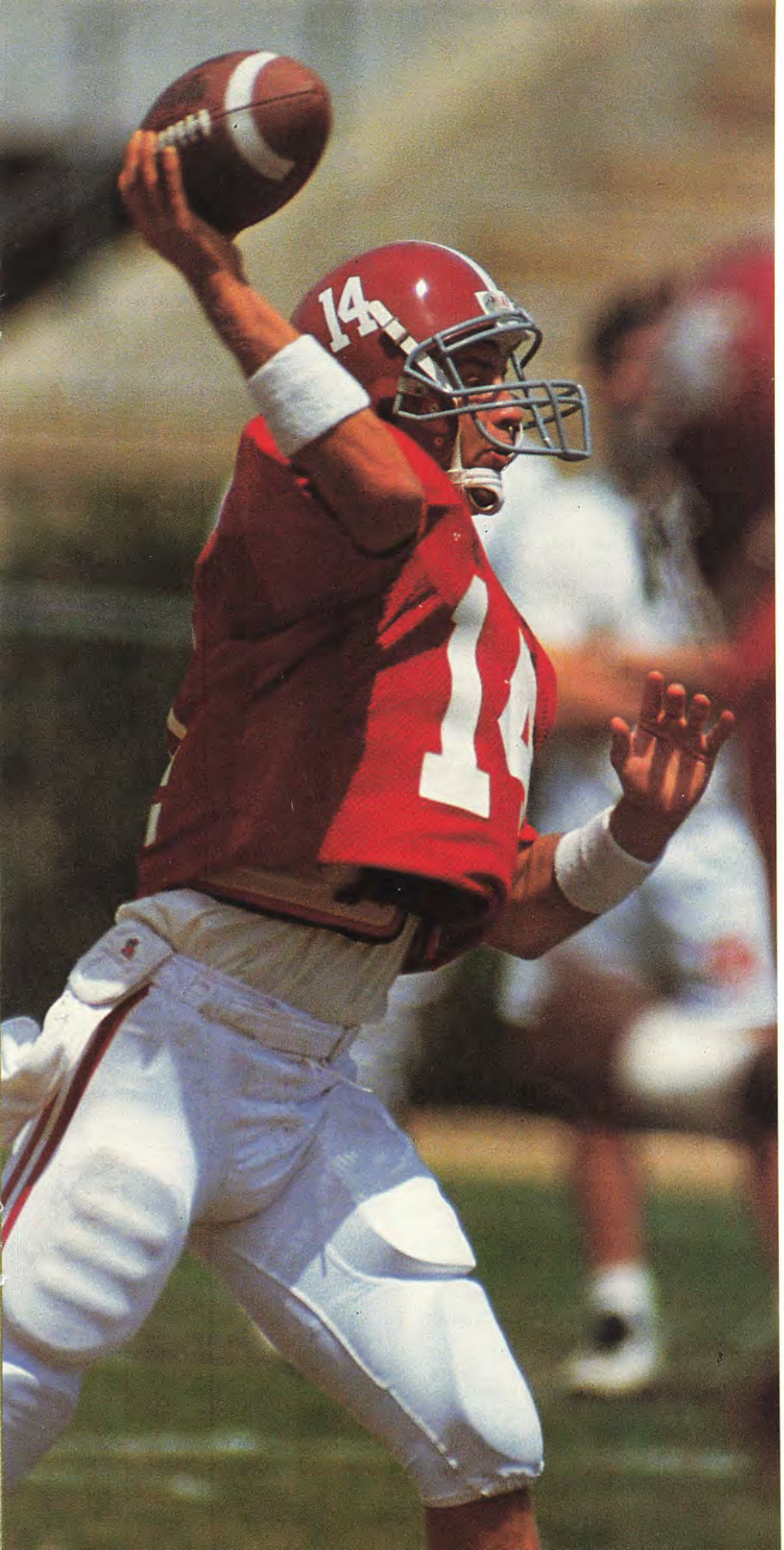
There are obvious benefits to the competition. Both Barker and Burgdorf believe they are better football players now for having to push themselves in this quarterback race. And Alabama Assistant Head Coach Mal Moore, who coaches Tide quarterbacks, pointed out that knowing Burgdorf is ready to play gives the team a measure of security to do more things offensively.

While Barker and Burgdorf have different strengths as quarterbacks, Moore said



Jay Barker has started 17 consecutive games for Alabama and Alabama has won all 17 of those, part of the nation's longest winning streak of 23 games. While Barker has been Bama's starting quarterback for over a year, prior to coming to Alabama he had only one year of quarterback experience, one reason he believes he will continue to improve.

Barry Fikes Photo



both can work within the framework of the same offense.

"Jay has the playing experience and that's an edge," Moore said. "He also has a stronger arm. On the other hand, Brian has better speed and quickness and has a good touch throwing the ball.

"I think they complement each other and we plan to utilize both of them. They are both capable of handling the same type approach. But when one's in the game we might stress one phase of the offense over the other, and it gives us an added dimension. But both work the same offense."

Quarterback is not just another position on the football field. It is the most important position, the place where every play begins. Virtually every play is doomed if quarterback execution fails. Almost every football coach believes in the philosophy of one quarterback. However, that doesn't mean that a second quarterback doesn't play, only that the team knows there is a definite number one. However, in the undefeated 1992 season, Barker was under center for every meaningful snap.

"I think the last couple of years we have been a one quarterback team because we haven't had the depth," Moore said. "Now we have a different situation. We are comfortable with two quarterbacks and I don't think we'll hesitate to come with another quarterback in certain situations. We want to do that because we want to have depth at that position. When you're making a drive late in the season, it's important to have two quarterbacks who have played a lot and who are ready to go. Hopefully that's the approach we'll be able to take. That's what we're planning. We needed to gain this depth to go through the season. We're gaining more depth at just about every position."

Every aspect of preparation is important, but spring training has the advantage of getting players ready without the distraction of game preparation. Moore believes that both Barker and Burgdorf benefitted from spring training.

Although Barker missed part of the work, plans prior to spring called for Burgdorf to get a very high percentage of the practice time at quarterback. Moore said, "We felt very good about the progress both made this spring. Jay left spring practice a better quarterback, a better feel for throwing and understanding coverages, areas where he needed to make progress.

"Brian came on real strong this spring.

Although Brian Burgdorf has a reputation as a running quarterback, and although he can run with the football very, very well, he insists that his goal is to be a top passing quarterback. The sophomore also has the goal of being Alabama's starting quarterback and leading the Crimson Tide to a national championship, as Jay Barker did last year.
Barry Fikes Photo

He got the most work he's gotten since he's been here. And at the end of the spring he was doing a lot of things well.

"We'll continue to run the football, but we believe we've got to get more production in our passing game to balance us up more and make us capable of doing more things."

There are no hard feelings between Barker and Burgdorf in this competition. "We're both playing for Alabama," Burgdorf said. "Everything we do is to make Alabama a better football team. Both of us want to be the starter and we compete on the field, but we're great friends. We leave it on the field."

Barker believes the competition from Burgdorf "is great. Everyone talks about this battle, but if Brian wasn't battling last year he wasn't doing me any good, he wasn't doing the team any good, and, most of all, he wasn't doing himself any good. But I assure you he was battling last year, too. Brian is a good quarterback. There is talk about a quarterback controversy, but if that's true there's controversy at every position. That controversy talk cracks us up. The competition is good for Brian and it's good for me."

Barker said that the competition between the two "is not bitter. We're not going to do anything that would cause any dissension on the team. We're going to do everything we can to make our team better and to make our team confident we have two teams that can play."

He also thinks having two quarterbacks helps the offense. "I think we can be a little more daring without worrying about me getting hurt," he said. "It will let me do more."

While all of the principals involved in Alabama's quarterback competition point to the bromide that competition makes everyone work harder, it is difficult to believe that Jay Barker could work any harder. Coaches and teammates know that no one has been more diligent in the weight room, on the practice field and in film study to make himself a better football player.

Barker spent the entire summer in Tuscaloosa. A typical day was classes in the morning, followed by a period of quiet time for introspection for the very religious Barker. After lunch he hit the weight room, then ran, and finished the day with other Bama players, throwing passes to receivers and backs for about an hour. "And," he said, "if there was time, getting out to the golf course." He also spent plenty of time looking at film of last year's games.

And even though Barker was the starting quarterback going into 1992, as he is now, he believes he has something else going for him. "I'm more confident this year because I know what it takes to lead this team to a national championship," said Barker, who did that last season. And, said the 6-3, 215-pounder, "you can't substitute anything for the experience I got last year. I can look back and see where I was strong and where I was weak and know that I have to keep working to improve those weaknesses and to make the strengths stronger. I feel really positive about this year. I've gotten the job done in the past and I don't have any doubts that I'll do a better job this year."

An examination of Barker's statistics is superficial. The best way to judge a quarterback is the team's won-lost record. Barker-led Bama teams are 17-0 when he starts. Last year he completed 132 of 243 passes for 1,614 yards with seven touchdowns and nine interceptions. He completed 14 of 17 passes for 192 yards and three touchdowns against Arkansas and he was named Southeastern Conference Offensive Player of the Week for his performance against Ole Miss, when he was good on 25 of 39 attempts for 285 yards.

"I don't think I have anything to prove to anybody," Barker said. "The only things I have to prove are the things I want to prove to myself. I try to find the positive aspects. You can listen to the critics, but I try not to do that. They just want to look at the negatives. They don't want to look at winning the national championship or winning 17 straight games or the leadership."

While this will be Barker's third season to quarterback Alabama, it will be only his fourth year as a quarterback. He played that position only one year in high school. "I feel really positive this year," he said.

Barker believes one reason for that is the learning experience. "I go back and look at the films and think about the things I did and know so much better now what to do. It's a learning experience for me every day. I'm getting better and better and I think I can progress every year. If I ever get content with where I am as a quarterback, I don't think I'll be a winning quarterback."

Barker expects his improvement can come in the decision-making process, "when to throw the football, but also in some running situations." He said that while some may doubt his ability to throw the football effectively, "when they let me pass, I think I can throw the ball as well as anyone. It's tough to just throw on third and long. We were very conservative last year, running the ball a lot. That's because of our defense. We were playing position football because we had the nation's best defense. People who know football understand that. Coach Stallings knew what he was doing. He knew we weren't going to give up points as long as we didn't make turnovers."

Barker doesn't think that Alabama will be pass happy this year, but does think the offense will be more open. "I think because of me and the receivers that we won't be quite as conservative as we were last year. That's not for statistics; that's for confidence, so when that third down does come around, we'll be in a rhythm."

Almost weekly last year Stallings said, "We've got to have more production from the passing game," with about 175 yards per game his target. But on Saturdays, Bama rarely called enough pass plays to make that goal realistic. Barker hopes this year will be different. "If we want to average 175 yards a game, we've got to throw the football. We can't get 175 yards throwing nine or 10 times a game. Even looking back at the Ole Miss game, I think I started off about two for 10, then completed the next eight. Quarterbacks and receivers have to get in a rhythm. When you don't throw a lot it makes it tougher on both of them because you have to get the timing down.

"I think this year Coach Stallings will have more confidence in me and in the receivers and in the offensive line."

Brian Burgdorf does not want to be a good backup quarterback for Alabama. His sights are set higher. He wants to be the starting quarterback this year.

"I'm a lot further ahead than I was this time a year ago," Burgdorf said. "This time a year ago I didn't have the opportunity to win the starting job. I was the backup. Coach Stallings said I was the backup. I didn't have a shot. This year I do think I have a chance. I've worked hard and I think I've improved each day and that's what I've got to do this year. You have to wait your turn; you have to walk before you can run. And that's what I've done."

Burgdorf, slightly smaller than Barker at 6-2, 192, realizes he got that opportunity in the spring. And he showed the results of that opportunity in the A-Day Game, when he won the Dixie Howell Award as the most outstanding player in the game. He led his team to victory by completing 14 of 16 passes. That's a far cry from his 1992 season. Burgdorf, who was redshirted in 1991, saw action in six games last year, completing 12 of 23 passes for 160 yards and rushing 11 times for 33 yards. He was in for 38 plays against South Carolina, only 29 total in the other five games in which he participated. "I felt good about the South Carolina game, but I didn't make the difference in the game," Burgdorf said. "There wasn't any game I made a difference in, and I'd like to change that."

The sophomore doesn't deny it was frustrating to have so little playing time in 1992. "I never did know why I wasn't playing. The coaches never explained that to me. But they didn't have to. We were 13-0, so they knew what they were doing. There's no arguing with that."

But he was on stage in spring training. "It helped me so much just to know that I had a chance to do it and to go out and work with the first team," Burgdorf said. "It's hard to get a look when you're the backup and not working with the first team.

"And it helped my confidence, which is

critical for a quarterback."

Burgdorf spent the 1991 season primarily as an observer, the third team quarterback in a two-platoon system, Barker and Danny Woodson sharing the playing time. Late in that year he became the scout team quarterback, a role he considers beneficial. "It really helped because I was working against our first team defense," he said. Working against a scout team wasn't new for Burgdorf. Even though he was his high school's starting quarterback, he operated the scout team for the defense throughout his prep career. "I believe it really helps a quarterback to go against the best defenders," he said. "And I assure you, the toughest defense I've seen since I've been at Alabama is Alabama's defense. I'd rather go against anyone else."

Although Burgdorf didn't get a lot of playing time last year, he was the definite number two quarterback throughout the season. "I got a lot of snaps in practice, and that helped me, but it's not the same as playing," he said. He makes a case for the backup quarterback having a tougher job than the starter. "It's hard to come off the bench cold," he said. "It's harder to be prepared. The backup quarterback has to watch every play and he can't get caught up in the excitement of the game. I watched each play to see what the defense was doing. And watching from the sidelines is a different perspective than from behind center." And he had to stay close to his coaches in case he was called on.

Burgdorf thinks his advantages as a quarterback are quickness and throwing accuracy. He knows he needs "to work on reading the defenses. And becoming a better leader. I don't want to have to be counting on my teammates; I want them counting on me."

The toughest aspect of being a quarterback may be the mental, Burgdorf said. "The thinking part is the most important, because you're going to make a decision where to take the football, and that decision needs to be based on what the defense is doing," he said.

In addition to reading defenses, Burgdorf found himself surprised by something he read in a newspaper last winter. The story indicated Burgdorf planned to transfer. "It was one of those things where no one had asked me anything about it," he said of the story. "There was absolutely no truth to it. I guess people assumed since I wasn't playing that I would leave. If I was going to do that, I'd talk to Coach Stallings before anyone. But this is where I want to be and I wouldn't change my decision. Everyone wants a chance to play and I'm going to get that. But I'm close to everyone on this team."

There's at least one other false rumor about Burgdorf as far as he's concerned. "I'm labeled as an option quarterback," he said. "That's not true. I have good speed, 4.5 in the 40, but I like to pass. I threw it more in high school than I ran it. I probably do more sprint out and play action than drop back, but I'm thinking pass. If it's not there, then I'll pull it down and run with it. And I do love to run it. There's nothing like picking up a first down for your team running when the pass isn't there."

Burgdorf knows he's going to get more playing time this year. He'd like to start off in the Tulane game getting at least a half at quarterback. "I didn't get much playing time last year, and I'd like to get a lot of playing time early to get the experience. I think that would help the team to have two units."

But, surprisingly perhaps, Burgdorf is a one quarterback man. "I'm not for playing two quarterbacks, unless you have to," he said. "But it's good to have a backup quarterback with experience."

Burgdorf's real hope is that he will have experience as starting quarterback on a national championship Alabama football team.

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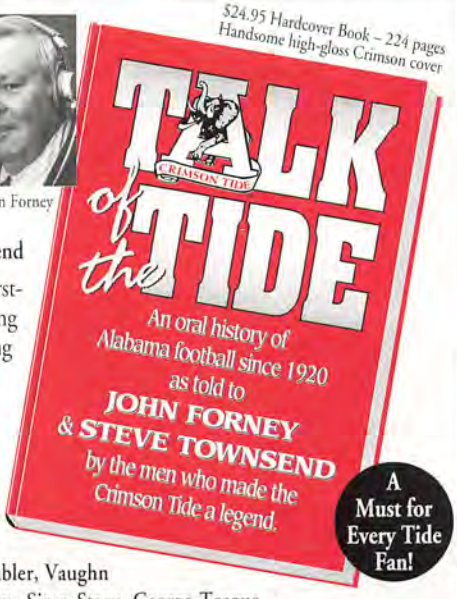

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TALK OF THE TIDE *will be available at your local bookstore beginning in October.*

Mickey Conn:

A Walk-On Works For His Dream

by Kirk McNair

All junior defensive back wanted was a chance, and Bama has given it to him

Alabama Head Coach Gene Stallings frequently speaks on behalf of the underprivileged and handicapped and a theme of his remarks is that helping others gives them what they need most–an opportunity. And Stallings does that, not only in charity to the disadvantaged and unfortunate, but also in giving a chance to football player wannabees.

Over the past three years a half dozen or so players who walked on at Alabama have been rewarded with scholarships. As much as that, for many of them, they have been rewarded with the opportunity to play football for the Crimson Tide.

All Mickey Conn wanted was a chance. Now he sports a national championship ring and is listed forever on the Alabama list of football lettermen. Conn hasn't reached all his goals, but his is a success story. Bama recognizes its nonscholarshipped football players in various ways, one of them the presentation of the "Coach Bear Bryant Best Walk-On Award" in the spring. Mickey Conn's name is now inscribed on that plaque.

Although Conn is listed as from Snellville, Georgia, where he played his high school football at South Gwinnett High School, the blood in his veins is Bama crimson, not Georgia red. Conn lived in Southside near Gadsden until he was 12 years old. His early childhood heroes were Coach Paul Bryant and the Alabama football players. His move to the Atlanta area did not diminish his allegiance to the Crimson Tide.

Conn was a prep star for Coach Larry Williamson's South Gwinnett squad, playing wingback on offense but having the most success on defense, where he was primarily a defensive back but also played a little linebacker. He was his team's most valuable player both as a junior and as a senior in 1989. But he was a little over 5-9 and 170 pounds. College scholarship offers did not come pouring in.

So Mickey Conn took things into his own hands. Gene Stallings was new on the job at Alabama. Conn wrote to Stallings, telling Bama's head football coach of his desire to play football for the Crimson Tide. Stallings called Conn's father, then sent an invitation for Conn to make an official visit to Alabama. A couple of weeks after signing day, the Conn family arrived in Tuscaloosa. For several weeks prior to

The quickest way for a nonscholarshipped football player to gain playing time is with the special teams, and Mickey Conn has done that at Alabama. This year he hopes to have more playing time at cornerback.

Barry Fikes Photo

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signing date in early February, weekends in Tuscaloosa include anywhere from a handful to dozens of prospects and their families making official visits to the campus. On this weekend the visit list was a short one: the Conns. But Mickey Conn was treated like any other prospect coming in, a player (Mike Campbell) and a Bama Belle assigned as his host and hostess to see the campus.

"I got to meet with both Coach Stallings and Coach Oliver (Secondary Coach Bill Oliver) on a one-to-one basis," Conn said. "They told me what my situation was, that they'd like for me to walk on and they'd give me a shot. That's all I wanted. Coach Stallings was encouraging. He told me if I thought I could make it, he would give me the opportunity and if I was good enough to play, he would play me. I knew if I had the opportunity I could make it. All I had to do was get out on the field and prove it. It had always been a dream of mine to play here at The University of Alabama."

As he approaches his third year, Conn said, "I have been given the opportunity."

No one would suggest that Mickey Conn has been an Alabama star thus far in his Crimson Tide career. Not on Saturdays, at least. Not yet. But he has made his presence felt in Bama practices almost since Day One in the fall of 1990.

"I think they (the coaches) like the fact that I work hard and hustle every play, and I think that's where my break came," Conn said. It didn't take Conn long to get noticed. The first practice Alabama's 1990 team had in pads in August, Conn got in a fight with Bama wide receiver Craig Sanderson. "I think the coaches noticed me that day," Conn said. "I was trying to show them I wasn't going to back down to anyone, even the big boys."

Conn said he discussed the situation with Sanderson. "He had been hurt, and I guess maybe I should have taken that into account, but that's the way I play football. I wasn't trying to hurt anyone, but the way I play the game is aggressively."

Almost everyone expects a walk-on freshman to be redshirted. However, Conn didn't know what to expect and actually had hopes of making the travel squad. It wasn't to be. "I was kind of hiding my head, because I thought I'd come down here and make the team, at least make the special teams," Conn said. "But once I got here and saw what it was really all about that I was going to be redshirted. I knew I wasn't good enough to play."

His first year at Bama was spent as a member of the scout team. But rather than be downcast about it, he looked for the opportunity of being on the scout team. While a third team member of the travel squad will probably get very little work at his position, a scout team player gets a lot.

"The way I looked at it was I wasn't going to be playing on Saturday, but it was training for the years ahead," Conn said.

Mickey Conn

"I felt the only opportunity for me to prove myself was to stay in every play. I believed that was the way for me to get noticed (by the coaches). Even when people would come in for me, I wouldn't let them take me out. If I was playing right cornerback and someone came in for me, I'd go put myself in for the left cornerback. I believed the way to get noticed was to show the coaches I was interested and that I was hustling and working and trying to get better every day. I wanted the coaches to know that I wasn't just out there so I could say I was on the football team. I wanted to play."

If a freshman doesn't know what to expect when he shows up in the fall, he really doesn't know what to expect at his first spring training. Again, Conn looked on it as an opportunity. "It was really encouraging," he said. "Coach Oliver gave me a lot of opportunities and I moved myself up on the depth chart. We didn't have an A-Day Game that year because they were redoing the stadium, but in the final scrimmage I got a lot of work. I really felt confident after spring training."

After his first year, Conn went home to Georgia. For a very short while. "I realized I wasn't going to get better working out by myself, so I came back to Tuscaloosa where I could work out with the guys," he said. He has spent every summer since in Tuscaloosa.

Conn's first Alabama game participation came in the first game of his second year when he played on the kickoff team in Bama's 41-3 1991 season-opening victory against Temple. His first major disappointment came the next week. "You can only dress so many players (65) for a Southeastern Conference game," Conn said. "Our second game was at Florida, the game we got smeared (35-0 in Gainesville), and when the bus left for the airport, I wasn't on it. I had thought I was good enough to be on the travel squad, and that really disappointed me," he said.

The ups-and-downs of his career included a major up after a conversation with Stallings following the Florida game. "He told me he was looking for people to cover kickoffs, and I was on the kickoff team the next week against Georgia," Conn said. "Since I had played high school football in Georgia, that was an awesome thing for me." And he stayed on the travel squad until the third weekend in October. Then another down. He didn't dress for the Tennessee game.

"It took a lot of patience and a lot of prayer, but my prayer was answered at the end of the year," Conn said. "The two most important games for me to dress for were Georgia and Auburn, and I got to dress for the Auburn game. Even though I didn't play in that game, it was a great experience to be back on the travel squad.

For the year, he played in seven games and had two tackles.

Conn said that last season was "still an uphill battle for me personally," but being a part of Bama's national championship "made all of the hard work worth it." As a sophomore last year he saw action in eight games, again primarily on special teams, and turned in six tackles. He saw most of his playing time as a cornerback–34 snaps–in the Tide's 48-7 romp over South Carolina. "I'll never forget halftime of the South Carolina game," Conn said. "It was homecoming and we were up 38-0 and Coach Oliver came in and started putting stuff on the board. And then he stuck my name up there. Playing on special teams is one thing, but playing a position is something else. After my first play at cornerback I was absolutely drained because I was so nervous. Then the next week Coach Oliver told me after looking at the film that he thought I had done pretty good."

And another highlight for him was finally regaining his spot on the kickoff coverage team, that assignment coming in the final game of the year, against Auburn.

Although he played in eight games, he was in the secondary in only two of them. Against Tulane he saw duty both as a cornerback and as the nickel back in Alabama's long yardage defensive scheme.

Conn was still on the kickoff coverage team when Bama destroyed Miami in the Sugar Bowl, and that assignment probably cost him a chance to play cornerback in that national championship contest.

"I would have played cornerback late in the game, but I got knocked out cold on the last kickoff," he said. "I chipped a few teeth and had a few stitches and the trainers had the managers take up my shoulder pads and helmet. I was kind of upset. I told them, 'If Bear Bryant was here, he'd let me play.' They thought I was knocked out so bad I thought I was talking to Coach

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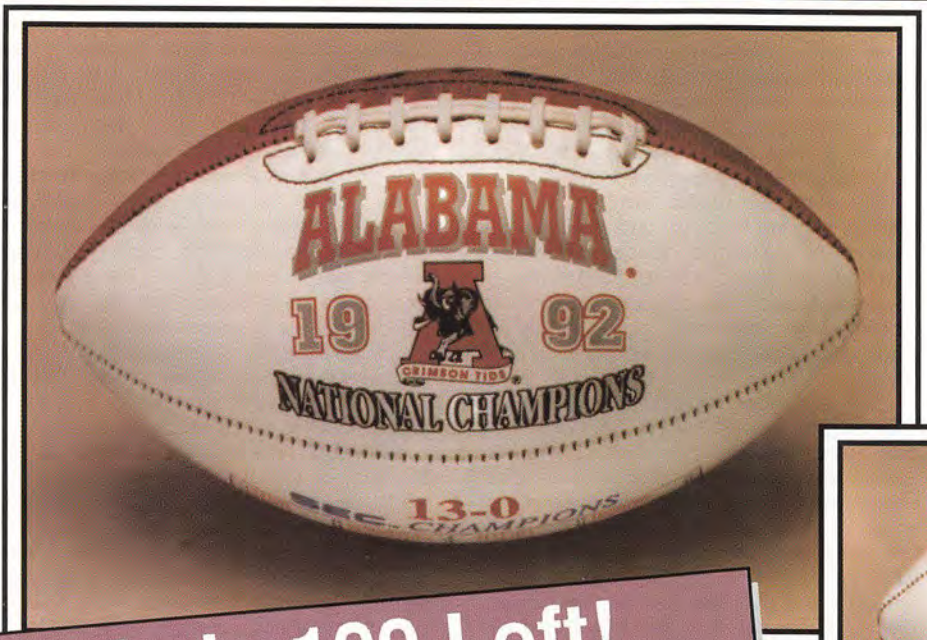

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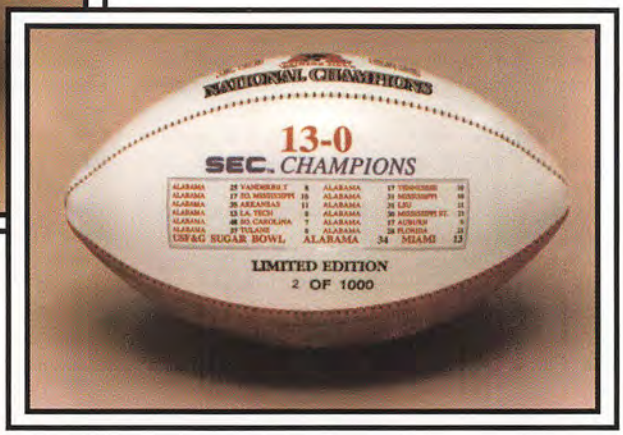

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Bryant. After we got back to Tuscaloosa I saw Coach Oliver and he asked me if I had heard from Coach Bryant lately."

Conn's sacrifice did get Alabama some yardage. He was knocked out by a Miami kickoff return blocker who had gone out of bounds. After the play, Conn turned to walk off the field and the blocker came up behind Conn and slugged him in the back of the head. "They got 15 yards (penalty), and I got a few stitches, the knowledge that I have parts of three teeth in the Superdome, and about a three-day headache," Conn said.

Since that 1990 redshirt season, Mickey Conn has believed that 1993 would be the year he would become a real contributor in the Alabama secondary. And his work in the spring indicates that could be the case.

Conn was very pleased to get a great deal of practice time in the spring, including playing virtually every defensive play in the A-Day Game. "I considered that another opportunity," Conn said. "I dropped two interceptions, but Coach Oliver told me I had gotten the job done." And winning the "Bear Bryant Best Walk-on Award" was a dream come true. "I had thought about winning it, but it's one of those things you don't really expect to happen," Conn said. In fact, he didn't even know he had won it until his father called him. Pop, Charles Conn, had seen a report of the award in the *Gadsden Times* while visiting relatives.

"It makes you realize the hard work is not for nothing," Conn said. "When you walk on at Alabama, you're not just a practice dummy. The coaches want to help you. Coach Oliver has certainly treated me justly. And when you get the job done, you earn their respect as a football player.

"But a walk-on always knows that the reason he's a walk-on is because they didn't want you to begin with. But if you want it bad enough, you'll do what it takes. There are a lot of things that are disappointing, but the other guys are going through it with you. There's nothing easy about it."

One thing that has helped Conn is his family. Although it is about a four-hour drive from his home to Tuscaloosa, Mickey is never surprised to look over on the sidelines at Alabama practice and see his father, who makes it to about half of Bama practices. "When I've had a tough day in class or I'm having a tough day at practice, it helps to look over there and see my dad over there on the bench. He and my mother (Paula) and sister (Jennifer) have been real supportive. If it wasn't for my family, I couldn't have done it.

Conn is a goal-setter. "I write down my goals for the year and for the future," he said. "I've reached some of them, but not all of them. I don't have much game experience, but I have a lot of practice experience and I know that if they call on me, I'll get the job done. I think I've earned it.

"There's a lot of competition because we have great cornerbacks like Antonio Langham and Tommy Johnson, but you expect that on a championship team."

Although Mick (almost no one calls him Mickey) is about the same size he was when he got to Alabama, one of his goals was to get quicker, and he has gone from a 4.8 to a 4.5 in the 40-yard dash. He still has other goals involving playing time and moving up the depth chart. And that big one–the walk-on's dream. About twice a year Stallings has been able to summon a nonscholarshipped football player to his office and turn that player into a scholarshipped player. That would be the ultimate for Mick Conn.

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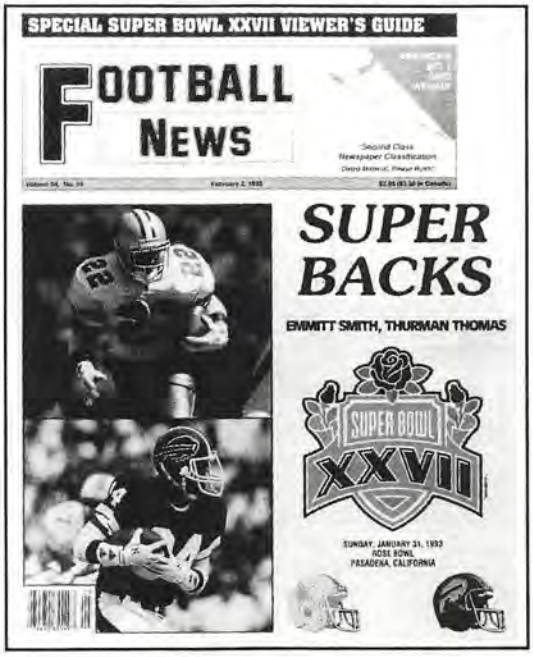

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Everybody's Rating Them

by Kirk McNair

Top high school senior football players already have been identified

Part of the recent tradition of the football preseason is the selection of top prospects by various recruiting services, newspapers, etc. This year is no exception.

For a number of years we have pointed out that Cecil Hurt of *The Tuscaloosa News* is the most thorough newspaper sports reporter in making his selections, both preseason and after the season. This year Hurt is on sabbatical, taking a year off to tour the world. However, we have very high regard for the man replacing Hurt in making this year's Sweet 16 selections for *The Tuscaloosa News*. That's because the sports reporter charged with that duty is Tommy Deas, a name familiar to 'BAMA readers since he has handled recruiting articles for this publication over the years.

The Sweet 16 in this year's *Tuscaloosa News* is:

1. Steven Harris, 6-1, 220, quarterback (and all-around athlete), Town Creek Hazlewood; 2. Fred Beasley, 6-1, 195, running back, Montgomery Lee; 3. Eric Kerley, 6-2, 280, nose tackle, Birmingham Berry; 4. Rod Rutledge, 6-5, 230, tight end, Birmingham Erwin; 5. Chris Hood, 6-3, 240, linebacker, Hazlewood; 6. Charles Johnson, 6-4, 230, tight end, Tuscaloosa Central; 7. Freddie May, 6-0, 206, running back, Tuscaloosa Central; 8. Geoff Wilson, 6-6, 255, offensive lineman, Robertsdale;

9. Trevis Smith, 6-1, 215, linebacker, Montgomery Lee; 10. Dan Witherspoon, 6-3, 280, defensive lineman, Mobile McGill-Toolen; 11. Montoya Madden, 5-9, 205, running back, Hazlewood; 12. Nakia Eason, 6-0, 165, defensive back, Bessemer Jess Lanier; 13. John David Phillips, 6-4, 195, quarterback, Anniston; 14. Tito Smith, 6-3, 200, linebacker, Birmingham Shades Valley; 15. Dennis Riddle, 6-0, 195, running back, Tuscaloosa Central; and 16. Kenneth Scissum, 6-1, 195, running back, Attalla Etowah.

There is much overlap in selections of the top high school football prospects in Alabama. This is an area where everyone cannot have a completely different opinion. For instance, Fred Beasley is going to be first or second on everyone's list of top senior football players in Alabama. Here's a look at some other preseason ratings. Those mentioned in one poll do not have complete information (position, size, etc.) in subsequent ratings.

The Birmingham News selects a Super Seniors list of 12 in the state, but adds a second dozen. Here are the top 24 in the state as selected by that newspaper:

1. Beasley; 2. Wilson; 3. Rutledge; 4. Jake Vest, 6-1, 188, quarterback, Daleville; 5. Phillips; 6. Kerley; 7. Hood; 8. Matt Harrison, 6-5, 250, offensive lineman, Dadeville; 9. Adam Russell, 6-2, 175, quarterback, Dora; 10. Cliff Jackson, 6-2, 218, linebacker, Lanett; 11. Eason; 12. Witherspoon.

13. May; 14. Grandison Wagstaff, 6-3, 215, linebacker, Enterprise; 15. Riddle; 16. Tony Gibbs, 6-2, 185, defensive back, Frisco City; 17. William Mays, 6-2, 235, fullback, Birmingham Wenonah; 18. Mark Davenport, 6-4, 215, linebacker, Alabaster; 19. Patterson Owens, 6-5, 260, defensive lineman, Mobile LeFlore; 20. Shawn Stuckey, 6-0, 215, linebacker, Daleville; 21. Harris; 22. Tito Smith; 23. DeCarlos Majors, 6-4, 230, offensive lineman, Birmingham Ensley; and 24. Trevis Smith.

Here is the *Mobile Press-Register* Top 16:

1. Beasley; 2. Wilson; 3. Rutledge; 4. Witherspoon; 5. Eason; 6. Hood; 7. Kerley; 8. Harrison; 9. Adrian Bullard, 6-3, 180, wide receiver, Frisco City; 10. Russell; 11. Madden; 12. Vest; 13. Phillips; 14. Owens; 15. Stuckey; and 16. Jackson.

We have received word that a suspicion we shared in last month's issue was ill-founded. We wondered how an Auburn alumnus, Bo Jackson, had been able to speak with Montgomery Lee superstar Fred Beasley when NCAA rules prohibit contact of prospects by alumni. However, we have since learned that it was reported on Auburn broadcaster Jim Fyffe's call-in radio program that Beasley was at Auburn for a football game last fall when Jackson was being honored

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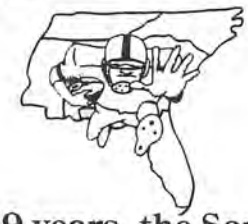

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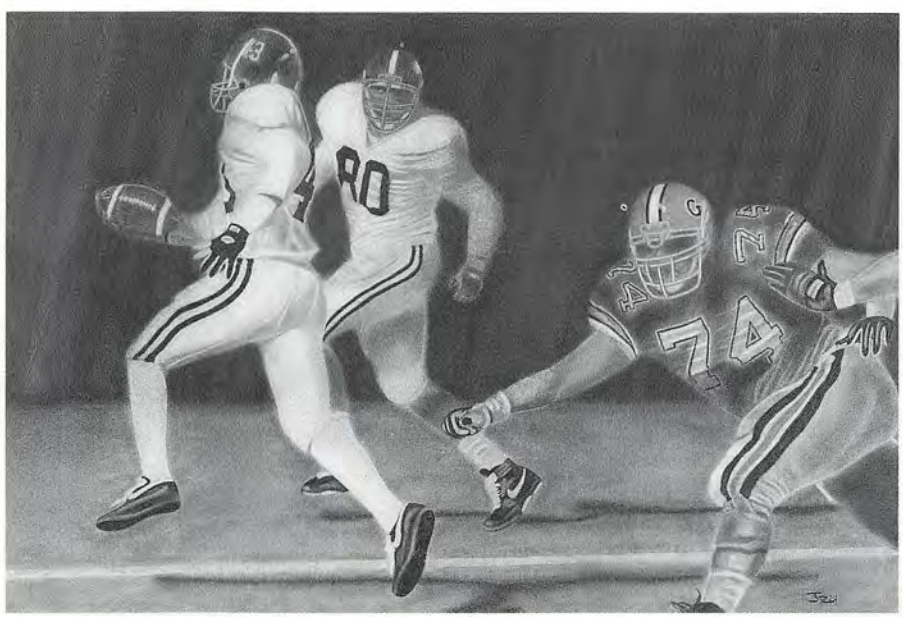

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  Mar. 12 - Complete listing of signees for each college and analysis of each class. **PLUS**, a complete final newsletter of where everyone signed will be made into this issue.

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and that Beasley initiated the conversation with Jackson. And they lived happily ever after. (Oh, no. That last part is from a different fairy tale.)

Beasley is one of a handful of top prospects who were spotted at early Alabama practices. Among others are Beasley's teammate, linebacker Trevis Smith, linebacker Grandison Wagstaff of Enterprise, offensive lineman Sage Spree of Warrior Academy in Eutaw, offensive lineman Geoff Wilson of Robertsdale, running back Dennis Riddle of Tuscaloosa Central, and offensive lineman Jason Hass of Scottsboro.

And there have been some prospects from out-of-state, too. Among them are three from Brentwood (Tennessee) Academy: offensive lineman Josh Swords, strong safety Allen Jackson, and quarterback Paul Murray. Also visiting was Lee Roberts, a quarterback from Pace, Florida.

Recruiting rules for this recruiting year are about the same as last year, the only significant change involving overall numbers. This year Division 1A teams are allowed 88 scholarshipped football players. In 1994 and 1995 the limit will be 85. However, up to 25 new signees may be added each year. Also this year a school may bring in only 70 prospects for official visits, five fewer than last year. A prospect may make up to five official visits to different institutions. There is no limit on unofficial visits, trips to a campus which are not paid by the institution.

Signings may begin on the first Wednesday in February, this year February 2.

In order for a high school prospect to make an official visit he must have taken one of the two national tests that must be passed for eligibility. Test dates for the SAT are November 6, December 4, January 22, March 19, May 7 and June 4. Test dates for the ACT are October 23, December 11, February 5, April 9 and June 11. A prospective student-athlete must again have at least a 2.0 grade point average in the core curriculum and have a passing score on either the SAT (700) or ACT (17) by the end of June.

As many as seven football coaches may leave campus at one time for evaluation and recruiting. Coaches may begin going to high schools games on Fridays only in October, then can make evaluation (but non-contact) trips throughout November. Contact with prospects begins in December.

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Cross Country Outlook:

Women Strong, But Men Young

by Donna Fromme

Tide has experience on women's team, but men have 11 freshmen

Add a feather to the cap of Alabama Cross Country Coach David Troy. His freshman class includes both the top male and female high school milers. But don't expect Troy to pop the champagne corks yet. Two tasks remain: he has to locate one missing piece to a puzzle and he has a mystery to solve.

"This women's group is small but potentially a very good team," said Troy, who has led Alabama's distance program since 1987. "The biggest question mark, one many cross country teams face, is that number five because we score five (runners). We're quite solid in our first four if everyone stays healthy, but we don't have a proven fifth runner."

Whoever anchors that spot will join twins Malin and Marie Ohlund and 10-time track All-America Vicky Lynch who placed 12th in the region in 1992. And given her high school achievements, freshman Becki Wells, a two-time prep All-America who placed 13th at the high school cross country national championships as a junior and tenth as a senior, should slide right alongside those three veterans in Alabama's lineup, particularly after a spring that found her with the fastest 800 and 1500 times in the nation.

The fifth spot runner will come from a group that includes sophomore transfer Cathy Cantor out of Kent State; junior Ashley Patrick, who has been the sixth or seventh runner on the Tide's team the past two seasons and placed seventh in the SEC in the 10,000 in the spring; freshmen middle distance runner Caroline Kerr; or Tara Merritt, a three-time Georgia state champion in the 800.

"All four of those have a question mark about them," Troy said. "We're assuming the first four spots are solid, and potentially they could be. Malin, Vicky and Marie all have considerable experience. Malin is a returning all-conference runner. She's our top returnee from last year. She had a wonderful track season and she's continued to run well through the summer, so I have every reason to expect she'll have a good cross country season.

"The women are certainly a team that is capable of being at the national meet. This is something that has eluded us the past two years, and I know the girls who are seniors on the team who have some experience are anxious to go there as a team, and they certainly have a shot at that."

Malin Ohlund

The Alabama women finished second in the conference in 1992, a fate Troy fears could be repeated. Last year's champion, Arkansas, returns the bulk of its squad and is expected to challenge once again for the national title. It finished second in 1992.

"The road to a conference title has the potential national champions in our way, so it's a tough assignment to win the SEC on the women's side. But those are two goals, to try to upset Arkansas at the conference and to get the team to the national meet."

And the Alabama men? That's a mystery, said Troy. On the surface his roster certainly doesn't compute to immediate power. Of the 15 team members, 11 are freshmen.

"Looking at the roster, you'll understand why I don't really have much of a clue of what's going to happen with this team," Troy said. "There are no seniors. There is one junior, three sophomores and 11 freshmen. That's a pretty young team."

Because of the dominance of youth, 1993 could be a year Troy will have to use for basic training, particularly in getting the men accustomed to the longer distance from what they were used to running in high school. But a year from now, it could be a different story.

"I'm very excited about the future of this group," he said. "A lot of these freshmen are national caliber. They were among the best high school runners in the country this past year. There's no question in my mind that it's only a matter of time before this group is capable of competing with the best in the conference and the best in the nation.

"Whether that time is in the next two months, I have some reservations. I would guess that we are going to take some poundings. We put together a schedule that is very competitive."

One of the things on Alabama's side as it faces that mysterious 1993 road ahead is that its freshman class is laden with state champions, men who aren't used to losing.

Freshman Brian Hesson is only the second person in high school history to qualify for the national cross country championships three different years. He placed third as a junior and eighth last year.

Nick Middleton is a two-time Indiana cross country champion and a two-time mile and two mile champion. He dominated distance running in Indiana and capped his career by being the top high school miler in the country.

Toronto's Faizal Emamaullee will likely have the easiest transition to the longer distance since it's similar to the length of Canadian races. Emamaullee is a member of the Canadian Junior National Team in cross country during the winter and ran the World Championships last spring and ran the 10,000 meters in the Pan Am Junior Games this summer.

Alabama's cross country state champion, Preston Hill, is described by Troy as the best state prospect he's seen. Florida's 2A cross country and two-mile champion, Wade Beroset, comes highly lauded, as does Tennessee mile state runnerup James McIngvale.

"A number of these other guys are guys we recruited with the hope they'd develop. Their high school credentials aren't as stellar as some of the others, but that can always be deceptive with the distance runner. They may be just a year or two away and it never showed in high school and by the time they are freshmen and sophomores, they might be as good as any high school runner was."

That group includes England's Eddie Whitehorn, Florida's Jody Spangler, Michigan's Jeff Ort, Georgia's Chris Holcombe and Madison, Alabama's Mike LeMaster.

"There are probably four or five of these guys who I feel very certain could make our top seven." They'll join returnees Sam Barall, Michael Dryer, Justin Rock and Bob Watson.

"It'll be fun. It'll be a fresh group and there should be a lot of enthusiasm and some competitiveness with everyone trying to make the team," Troy said.

The key, he believes, will be in developing a chemistry, a positive attitude and a competitive attitude–one where his state champions will continue to dislike the very idea of defeat.

The men and women run combined schedules, opening on September 11 in the annual Crimson Classic at The University's Harry Pritchett Golf Course. Alabama is at the Auburn Invitational September 18, the Notre Dame Invitational October 1, the Michigan Invitational October 17, in Baton Rouge for the October 30 SEC Championships, and in Greenville, South Carolina, for the November 13 NCAA District III Championships. The NCAA Championships are November 22 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

BAMA SCORECARD

Predictions

The continuation of predictions in various publications hasn't changed much. Alabama is still the consensus choice to win the Southeastern Conference West Division and to win the SEC Championship and Bama is still generally picked second or third in the nation, with Florida State the consensus preseason national champion.

At the SEC Media Days in Birmingham Alabama was the near-unanimous choice to win the West Division and was picked on 53 of 84 ballots to win the overall title. Florida was picked to repeat as East Division winner.

Alabama players selected to the preseason All-SEC team are wide receiver David Palmer, center Tobie Sheils, nose tackle James Gregory, outside linebacker Lemanski Hall and cornerback Antonio Langham.

The Stallings Show

The Alabama football highlights show, "University of Alabama Football with Coach Gene Stallings," will be shown in most Alabama markets and on several cable outlets. The 30-minute program will begin August 29 and air for 14 consecutive weeks. Cities, stations, central times and days are:

Birmingham, 13, 6 p.m. Sunday; Dothan, 18, 6 p.m. Monday; Huntsville, 31, 2 p.m. Sunday; Mobile/Pensacola, 44, 7 p.m. Sunday; Montgomery, 32, 5:30 p.m. Sunday; Sheffield, 26, 7 p.m. Sunday; and Tuscaloosa, 17, 10:30 p.m. Sunday. The show will also be on Columbus, Georgia, channel 16 at 6 p.m. Monday.

The show will also be shown on Comcast Cable in Tuscaloosa at 8 p.m. Sunday and on the SportsSouth Cable Network at 9:30 p.m. central time on Mondays. Incidentally, SportsSouth will also replay the Jefferson Pilot SEC Game of the Week at 11 a.m. on Sundays (including Alabama vs. Vanderbilt and Alabama vs. Arkansas).

Dimension Cable of Phoenix, Arizona, and Memphis Cablevision also plan to broadcast the Stallings show, but schedules had not been finalized.

TideTalk, the call-in radio show, is under way again. It airs on Mondays, for two hours on the first Monday of each month and one hour on subsequent Mondays, beginning at 7 p.m. central time. Even if you can't pick it up on an Alabama network station, you can call in at 1-800-676-8433.

By Phone And Video

Collegiate Sports Partners Limited, the parent company of The Alabama Sports Network, is making an effort to allow Crimson Tide fans away from Alabama a chance to see and hear Bama games. The company has a telephone broadcast of the radio play-by-play (cost about $40), pay-per-view available to out-of-state alumni groups, and videotapes of the weekly Gene Stallings replay television show. For complete information call (205) 425-5000.

The company has also put together a package of four videotapes with ABC broadcaster Keith Jackson chronicling Alabama's 12 national football championships. The package is $59.95 plus $5.75 shipping and handling plus $4.80 sales tax for Alabama residents and available by telephone or by writing TASN, P.O. Drawer 360207, Birmingham, AL 35236.

Pay-per-view telecasts of Alabama games not on commercial television will be available on cable throughout most of Alabama and in a few surrounding areas. Contact local cable companies for information.

1994 Schedule

Alabama no longer publishes future football schedules beyond perhaps a year or two, but the 1994 schedule is published in the 1993 Southeastern Conference Football Guide (available from the SEC, 2201 Civic Center Boulevard, Birmingham, AL 35203 for $15). Bama's 1994 opponents are the same as this year with the exception of Georgia replacing South Carolina as the Tide's SEC East Division foe. The schedule: September 3 Louisiana Tech, September 10 Vanderbilt, September 17 at Arkansas, September 24 Tulane, October 1 Georgia, October 8 Southern Miss, October 15 at Tennessee, October 22 Ole Miss, November 5 at LSU, November 12 at Mississippi State, and November 26 Auburn.

Basketball On TV

Although there has been an unusual delay in Alabama's men's basketball schedule being released, the Tide's televised games have been announced. Most of the televised games are part of the Jefferson Pilot package, including at Ole Miss January 15, Mississippi State January 29, at Kentucky February 2, at Georgia February 5 and at Arkansas February 16. However, the national cable network, ESPN, will have Alabama at Auburn January 25 and the Tide's home game against LSU February 8.

Good Recruits

Alabama's good basketball recruiting class, the first under Head Coach David Hobbs, has been noted. Now the most respected of the recruiting analysts, Bob Gibbons, has ranked the Bama newcomers as eighth best in the nation and best in the SEC.

Three In Amateur

Three University of Alabama golfers earned spots in the field for the 1993 United States Amateur Championship, which was scheduled the final week of August at Champions in Houston. Senior Scott Taylor and freshman Chip Deason won qualifying spots in Alabama, while Jess Amershadian shot a 65 in the New Jersey qualifying tournament to earn a berth.

Fall Baseball

Coach Barry Shollenberger's Alabama baseball team will begin fall practice September 20 and continue through October 18. Because of NCAA schedule limitations, Bama will play only intrasquad games during the fall. Workouts usually begin at 1:30. For dates and times of intrasquad games, contact the baseball office at (205) 348-6161.

Double Play

Alabama baseball signee Chris Eilers was the only representative from the state of Alabama participating in the U.S. Olympic Festival in San Antonio. Eilers pitched and played left field for the runnerup South team. At the conclusion of the Festival, a 25-man roster was chosen from the 100 players in the Festival Games to form a Junior National Team, and Eilers was selected to that elite squad. The team participated in a tournament in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

The Irish Are Coming

While the 1994 baseball season is months away, one aspect of the non-conference schedule has slipped out. Alabama has signed a two-year agreement with Notre Dame and the Fighting Irish will visit Tuscaloosa in the spring. Bama will take on Notre Dame in a three-game series March 10-12 at Sewell-Thomas Stadium. Alabama goes to Notre Dame in late April, 1995, where the games will be played in Coveleski Stadium. Ironically, the men for whom the stadiums are named–former Alabama star Joe Sewell and former Notre Dame star Stanley Coveleski–were teammates with the Cleveland Indians and both are in the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Coaching Change?

Is Alabama about to have a coaching change? There's no official word, but rumor has it that Alabama Head Women's Tennis Coach Karin Gaiser will be leaving The University to work in her family's business in Ohio. Gaiser has been head women's tennis coach at Alabama since 1984, slowly building a program that is now nationally-prominent. Last year the Tide ranked in the nation's top 20 and made the NCAA Championship field for the first time in history.

Burgess To Israel

Former Alabama women's basketball star Linda Burgess has returned to Israel to resume her professional career, and she is

taking something new with her: her degree from The University. After completing her eligibility following the 1992 season, Burgess signed with a professional team in Switzerland, but left that squad for a position with Ramat Hasharon in the Israeli League. She set club records with 33 points and 27 rebounds in a game and averaged 25 points and 15 rebounds as a rookie. This summer she returned to Tuscaloosa and completed her graduation requirements.

All-America

Alabama women's basketball star Niesa Johnson has been selected as a preseason All-America by *Host's NCAA Basketball Yearbook*. The junior, who was All-SEC last year, spent a week in South Korea in August competing for the USA Basketball Women's Junior National Team, her second year on the squad. She played in all seven games in the World Junior Championship Tournament, averaging 8.6 points and 4.3 rebounds with a top game of 20 points in a win over Bulgaria.

Tide On TV

The Alabama women's basketball team of Coach Rick Moody has landed another televised game. Bama's January 30 game against LSU has been selected for telecast on the Jefferson Pilot/SportsSouth package. It will be the second telecast of a women's basketball game from Coleman Coliseum and the Bama women's eighth televised game.

Olsen Shines

Former Alabama swimmer Jon Olsen came up big for the United States in Kobe, Japan. Olsen, a four-year All-America for Bama, won two individual gold medals at the Pan Pacific Games as part of the U.S. National team. He cemented his title as United States King of Sprints by winning the 50 and 100 freestyle events. Olsen picked up another two gold medals by anchoring relay teams. Olsen, who won two gold and one bronze at the Barcelona Olympics, was the squad's oldest member and captain. Angel Martino of Tuscaloosa, who earned a graduate degree at The University, was captain of the women's team. One of their coaches in Japan was Tide Head Coach Jonty Skinner.

Earlier in the summer Olsen won his first national championship when he captured the gold medal in the 100 freestyle at the U.S. Swimming Championships in Austin, Texas.

No Protests

While several Southeastern Conference football coaches have been vocal in their opposition to Birmingham as the site of the SEC Football Championship Game, there has been nary a peep of protest from the league's volleyball coaches that the championship tournament is apparently returning to Birmingham. The tournament was originally scheduled in Birmingham November 25-27, then it was announced it would be in Chattanooga, but latest information is that the tournament is back in Birmingham, at Boutwell Auditorium.

Volleyball Losses

Alabama Volleyball Coach Dorothy Franco-Reed suffered some critical losses to her team before the season even got under way. After graduating her first senior class last year since the program was reinstated in 1989, the 1993 team has only one senior–hitter Kerri Kuiper. The Tide lost two key players during the summer. Marta Bickert, the 1992 team leader in kills and digs, elected not to return for her junior season. Lynn Wondrasek, who would have been a senior, was forced to give up the sport for medical reasons.

The Tide season gets under way September 3-4 as Bama hosts one of two tournaments it will have this year. The Alabama Invitational will include Tennessee Tech, Southeast Louisiana and Syracuse. Also, September 17-18 Tulane, Bradley and Clemson will be in Foster Auditorium for the Crimson Tide Classic.

High Place

Alabama gymnastics signee Stephanie Woods of Austin, Texas, was the highest-placing American at the 1993 World University Games with a fourth place finish in the all-around competition. Woods placed sixth on vault and eighth on beam and was on the silver medal America team.

Fred Pickhard

Fred Pickhard, Jr., who earned All-Southern Conference honors as a tackle for Alabama in the 1920s, died last spring in Portland, Oregon. The Mobile native was 86. He was a member of the 1925 Crimson Tide team that defeated Washington, 20-19, in the 1926 Rose Bowl, the first bowl game in Alabama football history.

Longtime University of Alabama employee Jeff Coleman (who is a walking history of Alabama football) believes that Pickhard's death leaves Hoyt "Wu" Winslett as the last living member of that 10-0 national championship team.

Hall Of Fame Nominees

The Alabama Sports Hall of Fame has nominated several former Alabama athletes and administrators for induction into the class of 1994. The new class will include three from team sports in the modern era, one from individual sports/administration in the modern era, and two from the Old Timers' Category (those who have reached the age of 70 or whose careers ended 40 or more years ago). Among the nominees in the modern team sports category are former Bama football players Paul Crane, Scott Hunter, Ed Salem and Dwight Stephenson and former Alabama basketball player Jerry Harper. Among the nominees in the category of individual sports and administration are former Alabama trainer and administrator Jim Goostree and golfer Jerry Pate. And from the Old Timers list are former Alabama football player Walter Merrill (1937-39) and former Bama Head Basketball, Head Baseball, Assistant Football Coach and three-sport player Hayden Riley.

The new selections will be announced in mid-September.

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Schedules Of Alabama's 1993 Football Opponents

Team	Sept. 4	Sept. 11	Sept. 18	Sept. 25	Oct. 2	Oct. 9	Oct. 16	Oct. 23	Oct. 30	Nov. 6	Nov. 13	Nov. 20	Nov. 27
TULANE Green Wave New Orleans, La.	**ALABAMA** (Birmingham) 4 p.m.	@ Rice	William & Mary	Mississippi State	Navy	Southwest Louisiana	@ TCU		@ Boston College	@ Southern Miss	North Carolina	@ LSU	Dec. 4 @ Hawaii
VANDERBILT Commodores Nashville, Tenn.	@ Wake Forest	**ALABAMA** 11:30 a.m. JP TV	@ Ole Miss		Auburn	Cincinnati	Georgia	@ South Carolina	Kentucky	Navy	@ Florida	@ Tennessee	
ARKANSAS Razorbacks Fayetteville, Ark.	@ SMU	South Carolina	**@ ALABAMA** (Tuscaloosa) 11:30 a.m. JP TV	Memphis St. @ Little Rock	@ Georgia	Tennessee @ Little Rock	@ Ole Miss (Jackson)	Auburn	Mississippi State @ Little Rock	Tulsa		@ LSU	
LOUISIANA TECH Bulldogs Ruston, La.	@ Tennessee	Arkansas State	@ South Carolina	**@ ALABAMA** (Birmingham) 1:30 p.m.		@ San Jose State	@ East Carolina	Northern Illinois	Nevada-Las Vegas	@ Utah State	Central Florida	@ Southwest Louisiana	
SOUTH CAROLINA Gamecocks Columbia, S.C.	@ Georgia	@ Arkansas	Louisiana Tech	Sept. 23 Kentucky (ESPN)	**ALABAMA** either 11:30 a.m. JP TV or 6 p.m.	East Carolina	Mississippi State	Vanderbilt	@ Tennessee		Florida	Clemson	
TENNESSEE Volunteers Knoxville, Tenn.	Louisiana Tech	Georgia	@ Florida	LSU	Duke	Arkansas @ Little Rock	**@ ALABAMA** (Birmingham) TBA		South Carolina	Louisville		@ Kentucky	Vanderbilt
OLE MISS Rebels Oxford, Miss.	Sept. 2 @ Auburn (ESPN-TV)	Chattanooga	Vanderbilt	Georgia	@ Kentucky		Arkansas @ Jackson	**ALABAMA** 1:30 p.m.	@ LSU	@ Memphis State	Northern Illinois		@ Mississippi State
SOUTHERN MISS Golden Eagles Hattiesburg, Miss.	Pittsburgh		Northeast Louisiana	@ Auburn	Southwestern Louisiana	@ Georgia	@ Louisville	East Carolina	**@ ALABAMA** (Tuscaloosa) 2:30 p.m.	Tulane	@ Memphis State	@ Tulsa	
LSU Fighting Tigers Baton Rouge, La.	@ Texas A&M	@ Mississippi State	Auburn	@ Tennessee	Utah State	Florida	@ Kentucky		Ole Miss	**@ ALABAMA** (Tuscaloosa) 1:30 p.m.		Tulane	Arkansas
MISSISSIPPI STATE Bulldogs Starkville, Miss.	Memphis State	LSU		@ Tulane	@ Florida	@ Auburn	South Carolina	Arkansas State	Kentucky	Arkansas @ Little Rock	**@ ALABAMA** (Tuscaloosa) 1:30 p.m.		Ole Miss
AUBURN Tigers Auburn, Ala.	Sept. 2 Ole Miss (ESPN-TV)	Samford	@ LSU	Southern Miss	@ Vanderbilt	Mississippi State	Florida		@ Arkansas	New Mexico St.	@ Georgia	**ALABAMA** 2:30 p.m. ABC-TV	

Want to know what the other guys are doing?

While Alabama is probably your favorite football team, you may have an interest in another college team, or know someone who does. These publications are dedicated to covering football, basketball and all other sports for one school, just as 'BAMA covers the Crimson Tide. And like 'BAMA, each of these publications is a member of College Sports Affiliates Network, your assurance of quality. Each publication delivers page after page of player profiles, insider recruiting news, game reviews, scouting reports, and much, much more.

ARKANSAS - Hawgs Illustrated
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ARIZONA - Cat Tracks
The inside scoop on Arizona sports. 33 issues $47

ARIZONA STATE - The Devil's Tale
24 issues of in-depth Sun Devil sports coverage, $34

AUBURN - Inside The Auburn Tigers
All Auburn sports. 10 magazines plus 11 newsletters, $30

CINCINNATI - Bearcat Sports Digest
An up close look at UC sports. 20 issues $24.95

CONNECTICUT - Husky Blue & White
Complete UCONN sports coverage. 22 issues $33

DUKE - Blue Devil Weekly
Coverage of all Blue Devil Sports, 22 issues $28.95

FLORIDA - Gator Bait
32 issues of in-depth Gator sports coverage. $32

FLORIDA STATE - The Osceola
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GEORGIA - The Georgia Bulldog
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GEORGIA TECH - The Sting
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INDIANA - Inside Indiana
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IOWA - Voice of the Hawkeyes
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IOWA STATE - Cyclone Illustrated
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KENTUCKY - The Cat's Pause
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LSU - Tiger Rag
The Bayou Bengals, LSU sports coverage. 34 issues $39

LOUISVILLE - Scorecard
Complete Cardinal sports coverage. 33 isues $25

MARYLAND - Terrapin Times
In-depth U. of Maryland sports coverage. 19 issues $30

MEMPHIS STATE - Tiger Tales
Excellent coverage of Tiger sports programs. 48 issues $45.

MIAMI - Cane Sport
National powerhouse Miami Hurricane coverage, 21 issues $30

MICHIGAN - The Michigan Wolverine
Rose Bowl Champ, complete sports coverage. 25 issues $32.95

MICHIGAN STATE - Spartan
An inside look at Spartan sports. 25 issues $32.95

MISSISSIPPI - Ole Miss Spirit
Mint juleps, magnolias, and Ole Miss Sports. 32 issues $35

MISSISSIPPI STATE - Dawgs Bite
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Glossy full color Huskers coverage. 17 issues $39.90

NOTRE DAME – Blue & Gold Illustrated
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NORTH CAROLINA – Carolina Blue
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NORTH CAROLINA STATE – The Wolfpacker
Complete guide to NC State athletics. 20 issues $27.95

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Sooner glossy magazine sports coverage. 17 issues $39.90

OHIO STATE – Buckeye Sports Bulletin
In-depth OSU sports coverage. 30 issues $38

PENN STATE – Blue White Illustrated
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SOUTH CAROLINA – Spurs & Feathers
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TENNESSEE – Rocky Top Views
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TENNESSEE – Volunteer Magazine
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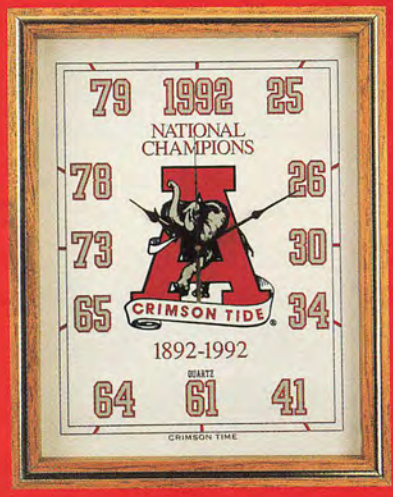

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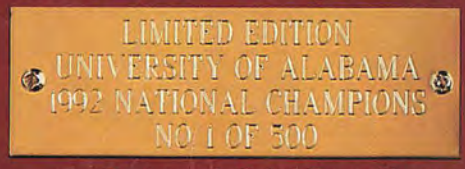

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